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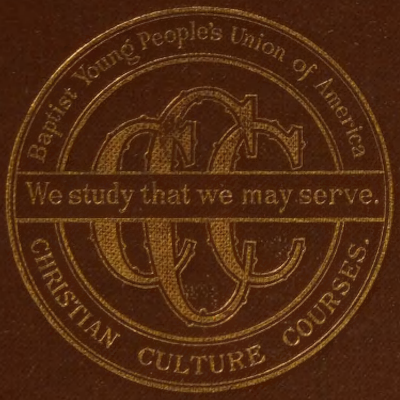
# The Dawn of Christianity

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Christian Culture Courses

# THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY

OR

## STUDIES OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

BY

HENRY C. VEDDER

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# PREFACE

"Of making many books there is no end"; why add another to the numerous studies of the Acts of the Apostles? This pertinent question, which will suggest itself to every one who reads the title of this volume, must be answered by the volume itself. If it cannot justify its existence by merely being what it is, no apology can prolong its life. Still, a word explanatory of the author's purpose may not be superfluous. It has long seemed to him that no study of the book of the Acts has been made suited to the use of laymen, young people, and students, whose main end was the exposition of the principles and polity of the New Testament church. Much exposition of the kind, of course, is to be found in commentaries like Hackett's, and in books like Clark's "Harmony"; but the exposition is incidental, ancillary to the author's main purpose. It has seemed that there is room for a book constructed on a new plan, in which the work of the literary critic and the commentator should be presupposed; a book historical in aim and spirit, but not assigning equal prominence to every event in the apostolic history; a book, in fine, that should be at once an account of the



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origin and progress of the apostolic churches and a practical treatise on their polity.

That a book of this kind might be of great service among Baptists, will probably be admitted. If we have any justification for a separate denominational existence, it is because loyalty to the New Testament teaching regarding the church compels us to stand apart from other Christians. We are accustomed to state our distinctive principles in something like this form : The Scriptures, the supreme and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice ; the church, a spiritual body, consisting only of the regenerate ; baptism, the immersion of a believer on profession of his faith ; the Lord's Supper, the communion of those thus baptized with their Lord and with each other ; each church independent as to its internal affairs, but all the churches mutually interdependent and united in all good works ; the absolute right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, without molestation, so long as he does not interfere with the peace and good order of society. These things are distinctive Baptist principles, however, only because we believe them to be distinctive New Testament teachings. The object of this book is to show the grounds of that belief, by a careful and candid study of apostolic times, in the full light of the latest biblical and historical scholarship.

These studies were originally published serially in "The Baptist Union," of Chicago, and the course was taken by over five thousand young people connected with the Baptist Young People's Union of America. They have been care-

fully revised with the assistance of several competent scholars, and freed from many imperfections incident to the method of first publication. The author ventures to hope that in their present form their usefulness may be much further extended, and that they may assist many pastors in grounding their young people in a sound knowledge of the scriptural sources whence are drawn the principles and practices of the Baptist churches.

With a view to making the book additionally useful to students, the references to supplementary reading at the end of each lesson have been materially increased since the first publication. Every one who uses this book is strongly recommended to read in connection with it one or more of the following: Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul;" Stalker's "Life of St. Paul;" Farrar's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul;" Dr. William M. Taylor's "Paul, the Missionary." These will be generally referred to by the names of the authors only. Another book, whose rarity and high price put it beyond the reach of most readers, yet is of very great value, is Lewin's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," remarkable for its profuse archæological illustrations of the text. It would have been easy to multiply references; the aim has been to help the reader, not to exhibit the author's acquaintance with biblical literature.

# ANNOUNCEMENT

*To the Baptist Young People of America:*

*This book forms an extension of a series of studies published in "The Baptist Union" in 1893–94, under the head of the Sacred Literature Course. At the request of the Executive Committee of the Baptist Young People's Union of America, they are embodied in this permanent form, in order that students who desire to take up the Christian Culture Courses may have access to them.*

*A very large number of students followed them as they were published in the columns of the paper, and over 1,100 presented successful examination papers in May, 1894. The universal testimony of the pastors and young people's workers who have followed them has been that Mr. Vedder's articles were exceedingly stimulating and informing, and have awakened a large appetite among their young people for more thorough study of the Scripture history and the principles of our Christian faith.*

*It gives me pleasure, therefore, to commend the volume, and to bespeak for it the favorable consideration of pastors and those who are planning for the Christian culture of our Baptist young people.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*FRANK L. WILKINS, Gen. Sec.*

# THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY

## INTRODUCTORY

### THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME

**In Judaism.**—The Church of Christ began its career at a time especially favorable to its rapid growth. The Scriptures teach that "when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son," and history confirms the saying. Had Jesus appeared in the earlier ages of the world, he would have had no hearing outside of his own tribe or nation. He would have had no hearing at all: his mild voice, exhorting men to peace, love, and righteousness, would have been drowned in the wild din of savage wars, and the Light of the world would have been extinguished in blood. Had he appeared in the earlier history of Judaism, his followers would have been crushed out by persecution or would have remained an obscure Jewish sect. The state of Judaism about A. D. 30 was more favorable for the spread of Christianity than any time before or later. Rome's policy toward conquered nations, though firm, was generally liberal, but it was particularly considerate toward the Jews. The emperor declined to meddle with their religion, but was content with placing over them a procurator and exacting the payment of a tribute little more than nominal. The San-

hedrin was still supreme in questions of faith and practice, yet this body lacked supreme power in the State, and therefore could not crush out a heresy with the old-time vigor, or the work of Jesus and his apostles would have been ended before it had fairly begun. They could only persecute in a fitful and illegal fashion. Thus the gospel preached by the apostles had an opportunity to make its way among the Jews by its own intrinsic worth and spiritual power, such as was offered at no other time.

Moreover, the *diaspora*, or dispersion of the Jews throughout the world had already begun. This was completed by the destruction of Jerusalem, a generation later; but the spirit of commercial enterprise and the love of wealth characteristic of Israel and his descendants, had already led them abroad; until, at this time, every Roman city had a Jewish population gathered in a distinctively Jewish quarter. To these the apostles went first; often they obtained a hearing, and for the most part won converts. There was also a large class of "devout" persons among the Gentiles, less stubborn in their Jewish prejudices and ready to hear the gospel of Jesus. The importance to the apostolic churches of these converts from Judaism is often overlooked in the study of this period.

Another favorable circumstance was the bitter rivalry between Pharisees and Sadducees. Had the Jewish nation, or those who should have been and were reputed to be its leaders, been a unit, they would have made short work of the religion preached by the apostles. Divided as they were at this period, persecution was only half-hearted. Few preachers of Jesus were put to death, the rest were driven

from Jerusalem. While the Sanhedrin was flattering itself that it had stamped out this dangerous fire of heresy, it had only scattered its embers throughout the Roman world, and wherever the sparks fell they found fuel ready to be ignited.

**In Heathendom.**—The influence of Judaism had made itself strongly felt upon the other nations, and the thoughtful men of all lands were feeling their way toward monotheism. The masses were still superstitious devotees of a multitude of gods, but the cultivated had ceased to believe in them. Among the Romans, religion had become a mere piece of statecraft, a useful juggle to deceive the vulgar but scorned by the intelligent. As Gibbon says, all religions were considered by the people equally true; by the philosophers equally false; by the magistrates equally expedient. In Greece, men had made culture their god, and all that the graces of art and literature and the light of genius could do for man had been done—and the emptiness of it all was most apparent to the most cultured. Heathendom was fast falling into a state of utter hopelessness. The horror of a great darkness settled down like a pall over the pagan world. How deep this gloom was we can best learn from the words of those whom the pagan world esteemed its wisest and its noblest. "Whom the gods love die young," wrote the poet Menander. Pliny is more hopeless still: "Every one," he says, bitterly, "should quiet his heart with the thought that the greatest gift nature affords is an early death; and the best of it is, every man can procure this for himself." Says Cicero: "Not to have been born were best, the earliest possible death the next best."

Sophocles, of all ancient poets the nearest in moral serenity and wholeness to our own Shakespeare, says :

Ah, race of mortal men,
How as a thing of naught
I count ye, though ye live;
For who is there of men
That more of blessing knows
Than just a little while
To seem to prosper well,
And having seemed, to fall?

In strict accord with such words were the acts of that generation. Many a noble Roman cut with his own sword the Gordian knot of existence, rather than live a life that seemed to him no longer worth living.

But if the pagan's ideas of this life were thus gloomy, his anticipation of the life to come was darker still. The heathen world died without hope. A shattered pillar, a lyre with its strings snapped and its music silenced forever, a rosebud crushed, beauty and fragrance alike departed—these were the sad emblems with which the Greeks and Romans denoted death. No thought that death was the gateway into a fuller and more glorious life assuaged the pangs of parting or cheered the mourner's heart. The future life, when believed in at all, was conceived as something cheerless and joyless, not to be desired save as a relief from the burdens of this life. Achilles says to Ulysses, when the latter meets him in the world of shades :

Rather would I, in the sun's warmth divine
Serve some poor churl who drags his days in grief,
Than the whole lordship of the dead were mine.

Such was the dreary future to which paganism assigned its bravest and noblest. As Archbishop Trench aptly says: "The whole period was the 'hour and power of darkness'; the world was again in chaos, and the creative words, 'Let there be light,' though just about to be spoken as yet were not uttered." A study of pagan literature shows how true it is that life and immortality were brought to light only through Jesus Christ.

There was another side to the spiritual state of the pagan world, however. Amid all this despair and skepticism there was an intense yearning for the truth. The best and purest men everywhere were longing for something better than philosophy had to offer them. There was a spiritual hunger, widespread and intense, for something that would satisfy man's craving for the good, some atonement for man's sin, some help for man's weakness. "We will wait," says Plato, in words almost prophetic, "till one shall come, be he a god or an inspired man, to teach us in holy things and take the darkness from our eyes." Men were blindly feeling out in the darkness after God if haply they might find him. When men of such aspirations heard the gospel, it "found" them; to the claims of Jesus Christ they responded with hearts both joyful and worshipful, "My Lord and my God."

**In the Roman World.**—The political and social condition of the world at this time greatly favored the spread of the gospel. Rome had conquered the world by her arms, Greece by her culture. The one had united the world in a vast military empire, the other had given to this empire a universal language. The fact that all men had drunk at the

same fount of learning and owed allegiance to the same government, was a bond of unity such as the world had never known before. It was a time of profound peace. During the reign of Augustus the doors of the temple of Janus were closed for the first time in centuries, and the heathen world came near realizing the vision of the Christian poet who sings of the time when

> The war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle flags were furl'd
> In the parliament of man, the federation of the world.

Travel had never been so general nor so easy. The armies of Rome had not only achieved conquests, but had also introduced order and promoted means of communication. Until quite modern times, no age was known when so great a part of the world could be traversed with such speed and safety. The roads made for Rome's legions to march to war served as highways for the envoys of the Prince of Peace. The ships that brought corn from far Asia to feed and quiet the rabble of Rome, brought also the bread of life to a perishing world. Roman law gave such protection to person and property as had never been known before. Many of the early Christians were, like Paul, Roman citizens; and they could not be condemned without a trial, and had the right of appeal to Cæsar. The ground on which the early Christians were condemned under Roman law, was treason to the State; and this was a false charge, resting on a misapprehension. That all these conditions for the spread of the gospel should have come about by chance is incredible; they must have been marshalled by intelligence and purpose—in other words, by Providence.

## THE SOURCES OF THE HISTORY.

**Luke and his Life.**—Luke is mentioned by name in only three places in the New Testament. In Col. 4 : 14, he is called "Luke, the beloved physician," and a comparison of this reference with ver. 11 warrants the conclusion that he was not a Jew. The other passages are Philem. 24, and 2 Tim. 4 : 11. It is said by Eusebius that he was a native of Antioch, and his name suggests a Greek origin. That he was a physician marks him as a man of exceptional education for his times, for there was then a medical college at Rome, charged with the duty of examining and licensing physicians in every city in the empire; and its supervision was by no means nominal. With the exception of Paul, he appears to have had a better education than any other New Testament writer, and he was better entitled than even Paul himself to be called a man of culture. Of all Paul's companions and co-laborers, Luke seems to have been the most valued, since it is all but certain that he is the "brother" described in 2 Cor. 8 : 18–20, "whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches."

Luke's intimate acquaintance with Jewish customs and doctrines makes it probable that he became a proselyte to Judaism before his conversion to Christianity. When that conversion occurred we can only conjecture, but it must have been some time before he appears in the apostolic history. We first hear of him, and then not by name, when he joins Paul at Troas (Acts 16 : 8–10), and the narrative suddenly changes from the third to the first person. Hitherto the writer had been the historian of deeds in which, apparently,

he had borne no part; now he records what he himself witnessed and shared. He accompanied the apostle, we again infer from the internal evidence of his writings, to Philippi, and there remained during the second missionary journey of Paul; at least he did not rejoin the apostle until Paul reached Troas, in the course of his third missionary journey. If Luke was not actually separated from Paul all this time, he does not appear to have been the companion of his travels and labors. That he remained with Paul during the long imprisonment at Cæsarea is a fair inference; certainly he accompanied the apostle on the voyage to Rome, and remained with him during the first imprisonment (Col. 4 : 11, 14). We may also conjecture that on Paul's release, Luke continued with him; for, during the second imprisonment, shortly before his martyrdom, the apostle writes: "Only Luke is with me," a tribute to the beloved physician's constancy, never to be forgotten. After the death of Paul, we have no knowledge of Luke, save some vague and conflicting traditions.

**Luke and his Writings.**—By the general consent of ancient Christendom the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are ascribed to Luke, though his name nowhere appears in them as the author. The two books were evidently written by the same person, as a careful study of their style establishes. Luke, more nearly than any other New Testament writer, appproaches the correctness and purity of the classical Greek. His style is remarkable for picturesqueness; trained as a physician to habits of close observation, he sees and records with unusual accuracy.

The integrity and credibility of Luke's writings have been

questioned by some modern critics, but they have successfully borne the test. One of the chief testimonies to the historical accuracy of the Acts is the series of undesigned coincidences between its text and the epistles of Paul, so well set forth in Paley's "Horæ Paulinæ." No critic has attempted to refute this argument, though some have tried to break its force and disparage its value. It is the general view, however, that it establishes the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles as well as of the Acts, since no forged documents could thus fit into each other.

Though called the Acts of the Apostles from ancient times, it does not appear that this title was chosen for the book by the author. "The Acts of Jesus" would suit his purpose better, since he declares in the preface that his Gospel was a record of "all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach", showing that his purpose in this book was to show how Jesus *continued* to do and to teach through his disciples. That the mission of Paul to the Gentiles should form the bulk of the history of the origin and progress of the early church, was due as well to the importance of this work as to any personal predilections the writer may be presumed to have had. The Acts may have been written from time to time during the missionary tours of Luke; indeed, some parts of the book seem to have been copied with very little change from a contemporary journal, or record of events. In its present form, the narrative was probably published during the first imprisonment of Paul. No other supposition satisfactorily accounts for the sudden breaking off; the writer evidently told no more because there was no more just then to tell, and if he had a purpose of completing his record, he was never able

to carry it out. If this theory is accepted as probably correct, the date of the Acts must be assigned to about 63 A. D.

## LITERATURE.

On the preparation of the world for the spread of the church, see Fisher, "History of the Christian Church," chap. 1; also his "Beginnings of Christianity," chaps. 1-8; Neander's "History of the Christian Church," vol. I., pp. 5-68; Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," vol. I., pp. 146–162; Geikie's "Life and Words of Christ," vol. II., pp. 223–228; Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," book I.; much valuable information is contained in Döllinger's "Jew and Gentile in the Courts of the Lord." A good general introduction to the whole history is chap. 1. Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul." On Luke and his writings, see the introductions to Hackett's and Meyer's "Commentaries on Acts"; Godet's "Commentary on Luke"; Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," articles "Luke, Gospel of," and "Acts of the Apostles"; Weiss' "Biblical Theology of the New Testament," vol. II., pp. 291–296. "The Medical Language of St. Luke," by William Kirk Hobart (London, 1882), is almost a demonstration that the third Gospel and the Acts were written by the same person.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. What traces of Jewish influence are found in Luke's writings? 2. Make an analysis of the book of Acts. 3. The speeches in the book—are they reports of what was said, with substantial verbal correctness? or do they give us only the substance of what was said in Luke's words?

# PART I

# THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

"Witnesses. . . in Jerusalem."

A. D. 30–35.

# I.

## THE SPIRIT GIVEN TO THE CHURCH.

In all our Lord's recorded teachings, he mentions the church (*ecclesia*) but twice, and these two references (Matt. 16 : 18 ; 18 : 17) occur toward the close of his ministry. In both instances the church is spoken of as a future and not as a present institution. The church potentially existed from the day when two disciples of John the Baptist followed Jesus and believed on him as the Messiah (John 1 : 35–40) ; but of actual existence as an organized society of believers during the life of Jesus there is not so much as a trace in the four Gospels. Jesus had much to say to his followers about the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, of its nature and laws ; but of the institution by which that kingdom was to be realized and extended among men, he said noticeably little. He left his followers no directions for their organization, no rules for their government ; all this was to be worked out under the leadership of the promised Comforter, who should guide them into all the truth.

**Waiting for the Promise.**— For forty days after his resurrection Jesus continued to show himself to his disciples before his ascension. He commanded his disciples not to depart from Jerusalem until they should receive the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1 : 1–5). After this they were to go and disciple all the nations (Matt. 28 : 19, 20). Obedient to their Lord, they gathered in "the upper cham-

ber, where they were abiding," and there "with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer" (Acts 1 : 12–14). While thus waiting, at the suggestion of Peter the vacancy among the twelve apostles caused by the treason and suicide of Judas, was filled by the choice of Matthias, by lot (Acts 1 : 15–26). This transaction is so related by Luke as to leave us in doubt whether it is approved. In this waiting of the apostles for the descent of the Holy Spirit, we see prefigured the nature of the church of Christ. It is to be composed of those born of the Spirit, who serve Christ under the continual guidance of the Spirit. Spirituality is its first and most striking, as well as its fundamental characteristic.

**The Spirit Bestowed.**—The Jewish feast of Pentecost, as the name implies, fell the fifteenth day "from the morrow after the Sabbath" of the Passover (Lev. 23 : 15, 16). It is difficult to decide on what day of the week it fell. One method of computation (which Dr. Hackett follows in his commentary), would make Pentecost fall upon the Sabbath or Saturday; but the uniform tradition of the Christian church from the earliest times favors Sunday, and it is possible to compute the time in agreement with this tradition. Pentecost was "the feast of harvest" (Exod. 23 : 16); and two loaves of the finest wheat flour, the first-fruits of a completed harvest, were commanded to be offered before God on that day. In its social features, the day resembled the English "harvest home" and our own Thanksgiving Day. It was reckoned one of the three great feasts, and Jews from many lands gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate it. No occasion could have been more fitting for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. This bestowal, we read, was ac-

companied by striking outward signs—"a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind," "tongues parting asunder, like as of fire," and the speaking "with other tongues," by the apostles, so that every man heard his own language. The reality of these phenomena can be consistently questioned only by those who reject any supernatural event as intrinsically incredible, or those who deny the credibility of Luke, for his testimony is explicit. Whatever may have been the nature of the speaking with tongues in later years, to which Paul refers (1 Cor. 14 : 1–33), in this case it must have been the speaking in tongues hitherto unknown by these unlettered Galileans. The "cloven tongues" of our King James version is misleading; it is rather "tongues distributed," so that one sat upon each of them. These wonderful manifestations were at once noised abroad, and a great concourse of people came to see what this might portend.

**The Great Ingathering.**—Taking advantage of this curiosity and astonishment, Peter preached the gospel of Christ to these people: The special characteristics of his discourse are noteworthy: It was (1) scriptural and (2) practical. Its foundation was Old Testament prophecy, which all his hearers accepted as authoritative. Its end was to produce submission to Jesus, "whom God hath made both Lord and Christ." In these particulars it is a model sermon, and serves as an example to be followed through all time. Not only preaching in the sense of pulpit discourse, but all religious teaching, to be effective must proceed on these lines—the exposition of Scripture and its application to the business in hand, with the end always in view of producing submission to Jesus as Lord.

This sermon was made effective by the Holy Spirit to the conversion of three thousand persons, who, as the narrative plainly implies, without explicity saying it, were baptized the same day. This was only the beginning of the work—the tongues of fire were symbols, not of a temporary gift, but of the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of believers as an illuminating and sanctifying power, uniting them in one body. "The Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved," and the power to work "wonders and signs" was added as a further testimony of Divine favor.

It is doubtless this sudden awakening and rapid growth that have led so many writers to speak of Pentecost as "the birthday of the church." A figure of speech must not be pressed too literally. In germ the church existed before, but on this day it first arrived at a consciousness of itself as a society of Christian believers, and began a definite, organic life. It was still without formal organization, with no recognized head, no system of government, but the life was there and would evolve these things as they were needed. But simple as this beginning was, the fundamental law, the essential constitution of the church of Christ was as evident on the day of Pentecost as it ever became, and this constitution remained unchanged throughout the apostolic era. It was clearly demonstrated on this day that the church had broken with every tradition of the past, and was established on an entirely new basis—that of spiritual fellowship with Jesus Christ. For note, that Peter throughout his sermon exhorted his hearers to repentance for their sins and faith in Christ. Note also that only those who believed were added

to the church by baptism—"they then that received his word were baptized." It is quite possible, indeed probable, that in the multitudes that came together to hear Peter's sermon there were many small children, infants even. It was customary among the Jews for the whole family to go up to these feasts. If the baptism of infants were to be found anywhere in the New Testament we might fairly expect to find it here. But there is not a trace of it; it is excluded in explicit terms, for those baptized were those that received Peter's word—that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. That is to say, the church at Jerusalem was composed of those, and of those only, who made personal confession of faith in Christ, and thus gave credible evidence that they had been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Baptists hold this as fundamental among their distinctive principles.

**Baptism of the Three Thousand.**—That three thousand should be baptized in one day is no longer a subject for marvel or dispute. The researches of modern travelers have established the fact that there were ample facilities in Jerusalem for the immersion of even so many as this. Besides the large pools in the city, the houses were amply supplied with cisterns hewn in the rock. Some of these, measured by Dr. Robinson, were thirty feet square and twenty feet deep. A flight of steps generally led down to these cisterns, than which, when of the proper depth, nothing could make a better baptistery. The experience of missionaries and pastors has shown that there is no difficulty in the matter of time. In 1879, at Ongole, India, two thousand two hundred and twenty-two Telugu converts were baptized in nine hours, six ministers administering the ordinance.

The baptism of these converts followed directly upon their conversion. There was no protracted examination by church committees; the mere confession of Christ under the circumstances, when to confess him was to invite persecution and death, was proof of good faith and credible evidence of regeneration. Baptist churches should follow the New Testament order as closely as possible, and interpose as few obstacles to the immediate baptism of believers as is consistent with satisfactory tests of the sincerity of a convert's confession of faith. When deacons and committees and church machinery are permitted unduly to interpose between conversion and baptism we violate the New Testament order, and are unfaithful to our own principles. In our day it is true that the mere desire to join the church is no proof of regeneration; there are now too many advantages, social and other, connected with church-membership to make this a satisfactory test. An examination by the church, with or without a preliminary examination by its officers or an authorized committee, is now a necessity in order to secure credible evidence of regeneration; but this should not be unnecessarily protracted. The following of New Testament precedent should not be merely mechanical and slavish; some flexibility of method is permissible, but the end must be kept constantly in view.

**The Fellowship of the Saints.**—Baptism was not merely a public confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the formal induction of the baptized person into the company of believers, but the beginning of a new life of Christian fellowship in the service of God. The narrative makes emphatic the fact that it was only those that had been

baptized and continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship who united in the "breaking of bread." This phrase, though it may sometimes describe an ordinary meal, is used uniformly in the Acts and Epistles to denote the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20 : 7, 11 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 16). This supper was generally preceded by an ordinary meal, and was celebrated in the evening, in close imitation of the circumstances of its institution. It also seems plain that it was observed frequently, probably every day at the close of the evening meal, for a time. There is neither here nor elsewhere a justification for inviting to the table of the Lord either the unbaptized or the unconverted.

## LITERATURE.

On the constitution of the church, Wilkinson, "The Baptist Principle," will be found to contain much that is convincing. On the facilities for immersion in Jerusalem, see Robinson's "Biblical Researches in Palestine," vol. I., pp. 348, 374; Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," articles "Pools" and "Cisterns." On the baptism at Ongole, see Vedder's "Short History of the Baptists," Appendix A. On the method of reckoning the day of Pentecost, see a very thorough discussion in Clark's "Harmonic Arrangement of the Acts," pp. 149–153; but see also Hackett on Acts 2 : 1; Stifler's "Introduction to the Study of the Acts of the Apostles," sec. 2. On the gift of tongues, see Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," vol. I., pp. 231–242, and Farrar's "Life of St. Paul," chap. 5.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. The origin of Pentecost and Jewish customs in connection with its celebration. 2. The use of the lot as a religious custom; why have Christians discontinued it? 3. Compare Peter's quotations with the original passages; what is the significance of the variations? 4. To what extent are we justified in adding to New Testament usage? Formulate a principle that will cover all cases, if possible.

## II.

### THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN.

**The Miracle.**—No note of time is given to indicate how closely this event followed Pentecost; probably it followed a few days after this great outpouring of the Spirit. Though the followers of Christ held meetings by themselves from the first, especially upon the first day of the week, they did not withdraw from the regular Jewish worship. Ecclesiastically speaking, they were a party of the Jewish church, like the Essenes, not a separate sect. Formal ecclesiastical separation between Jews and Christians did not begin until a considerably later period, and was not completed until after the destruction of Jerusalem, if completed then. Years after this we find Paul going to the temple to perform a Nazarite vow (Acts 21 : 20-26). It is important to keep in mind this early relation of the Christian to the Jewish faith and worship. In going to take part in the temple worship Peter and John were doing no exceptional thing, but conforming to a general practice among the apostles and their brethren.

The reality of the miracle performed was as unquestioned as it was unquestionable. The man and his infirmity were known to all Jerusalem. The beggar was, and still is in the East, an institution of which we have a feeble conception. This man's lameness was not acquired, but congenital, which any physician would tell us is the most hopeless case found. The healing was complete, as is shown by his

immediately walking and leaping. Luke writes of this scene with a vividness almost warranting the conclusion that he was an eye-witness, and with an accuracy of detail that one might expect of a physician.

**The Testimony of Peter.**—Peter, as usual, was the spokesman. 1. He disclaimed for himself and John the possession of any miraculous power, and ascribed this act of healing to God. This would prepossess a Jewish audience in his favor and win him a further hearing. 2. He proceeded to preach Christ as having been sent by God according to the predictions of the prophets, slain by the Jews and raised from the dead, and avowed that the faith which is by him had given this man this perfect soundness in the presence of them all. Note that in this case, as in other cases given us, the preaching of the apostles is based on the exposition of what the Jews recognized as the authoritative word of God. There is no variation from this rule in the New Testament—the function of the minister of Christ is to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4 : 2). 3. He exhorted them to repentance. Preaching that does not have as its end the leading of men to forsake their sins and obey Christ, is not preaching, though it may be good religious talk.

**The Significance of the Miracle.**—Peter's testimony is explicit. The lame man was not healed merely out of compassion for him ; there were other cripples, perhaps as deserving as he, who went unhealed. Rather the healing was wrought as a demonstration of God's power abiding with the apostles, and as a seal of the truth of their testimony to Jesus and his resurrection. The word commonly used in the New Testament to describe a miracle means

literally "a sign." This healing was a sign that none who knew the man and saw him walking and leaping and praising God could dispute or misinterpret. Other cases of apostolic miracles are recorded: such as Peter's raising Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9 : 40), various healings through Paul (Acts 14 : 10; 19 : 12; 28 : 8), and the raising of Eutychus (Acts 20 : 10), though in this last case it is not absolutely certain that there was a miracle. These must not be confounded with other miraculous events, wrought upon or in behalf of the apostles, such as Paul's blindness (chap. 9), and Peter's deliverance from prison (chap. 12). In all the cases of undoubted miracle, it is the *sign* value, the witnessing power of the act, that we find emphasized.

**Post-apostolic "Miracles."**—This characteristic of the biblical miracles helps toward solving the much-vexed problem of the continuance of miraculous gifts in the church after apostolic times. The time would naturally come when this form of witnessing would be less efficacious than other forms, and at a later period the witness of miracles would be superfluous. The existence of the Christian church and the triumphs of the gospel in every land are a testimony to the divine power of Jesus Christ more convincing than any wonders in nature. The spiritual testimony outweighs the physical, and makes the latter needless if not confusing. God does not waste power, and miracle being needless in these days it is irrational to expect its continuance. Then too, we must recognize the fact that there is no authenticated case of post-apostolic miracle. Whether an alleged event actually occurred, and if so, whether it is properly called a miracle, are questions of fact, to be decided by testimony.

When we sift the testimony we find nothing worthy the name of evidence in favor of the so-called miracles of the centuries following the apostolic age.

But how is this conclusion to be reconciled with the promise that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick"? (James 5 : 14, 15.) Or with other assurances (such as John 14 : 13 ; Matt. 18 : 19) regarding God's willingness to answer prayer? Remarkable answers to prayer there have always been in the church, and doubtless always will be, including recoveries of the sick and afflicted that can hardly be explained save as a direct interposition of Divine power. These are not "miracles" in the Scripture sense, though we often use that word to describe anything marvelous, inexplicable, and possibly supernatural. The miracles of Scripture were wrought at the instance of some person, to attest his authority as God's representative and to secure a hearing for his message.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject of miracles see Mozley's "Bampton Lectures"; H. B. Smith's "Lectures on Apologetics," pp. 90-116; Bruce's "Miraculous Element in the Gospels"; Fisher's "Christian Evidences," pp. 41-46. On alleged modern miracles, see Buckley's "Christian Science, Faith-healing, and Kindred Phenomena."

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. The location of the Gate Beautiful (see Hackett's commentary on the passage). 2. The titles of Jesus in the New Testament. 3. Compare Peter's quotations from the prophets with the originals, and read the context of each carefully. 4. Compare Peter's announcement of Christ's second coming with other passages teaching the same thing.

## III.

### THE BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION.

**Origin of the Persecution.**—It is worthy of note that this first persecution of Christians originated with the Sadducees. It was not the attempt of Judaism to suppress Christianity, for as we have seen, Christianity was not yet regarded as a separate religion, but rather as a sect or party among the Jews. It had made, so far as we know, not a single Gentile convert; the followers of Christ were Jews who were still careful to observe all the requirements of the ceremonial law. We have here, therefore, merely the intolerance of one Jewish sect for another; for though others are mentioned as taking part in the arrest, the Sadducees are the moving spirits. The ground of their opposition is clearly stated and is purely sectarian: They had the apostles arrested, not because they preached Jesus as the Messiah, but because they "proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead"—a doctrine detestable to the Sadducees. At this time the "men of light and leading" in the nation were of this party; the chief priests, the men of wealth, of social distinction, and of political influence belonged to it. At the same time, a Sadducee was reckoned by the truly orthodox Jew—the Pharisee, who prided himself on his knowledge of the law and his exact observance of its smallest injunctions—as little better than a Gentile.

**Before the Sanhedrin.**—Though the body is not named before which the apostles were brought, the description leaves no room for doubt that it was the great council or Sanhedrin. This body came into existence after the completion of the Old Testament canon, probably subsequent to the period of Macedonian supremacy. Its composition was probably as follows : Twenty-four priests, twenty-four elders, and twenty-two scribes or men learned in the law. To be eligible, a man was required to be physically and morally without blemish ; he must have reached at least middle life, and must be a man of substance and learning. According to some authorities, he must also be a married man. The meeting of this council was held in the Gazith, a hall in the court of the temple. The Sandedrin had jurisdiction over all cases of heresy like the present, and was a court of appeal to which all capital cases could be carried. At this time, it had either entirely lost the power of life and death, or exercised it only in exceptional cases and by grace of the Roman procurator ; but minor punishments it could still inflict. Here, as elsewhere in the New Testament, the accounts given of the proceedings in this body agree exactly with what is known of its rules from Jewish writings. The attendance of so many persons of rank on this occasion was somewhat unusual ; the Sanhedrin sat every day, with the exception of the Sabbath and festivals, from the termination of the morning sacrifice to the evening sacrifice, and naturally a full attendance of members occurred only when some question of unusual importance was to be decided.

**The Testimony of Peter.**—The rules of the Sanhedrin were admirably adapted to secure the rights of the accused

and give him every opportunity to make his defense—when the passion of the council did not override all rules. On this occasion a full hearing was granted to the apostles, and Peter as usual became the spokesman. His defense was not only bold, he being filled with the Holy Ghost, but adroit; it was not a disputation, but a testimony. It was founded upon the undeniable fact that a wonderful healing had been wrought, and it ascribed this miracle to the power of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, whom this very body had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead, and in whom alone is salvation. This defense disconcerted the doctors of the law, who had come to confute these rival teachers with technicalities and subtleties. Peter and John they found to be unlearned and ignorant men, *i. e.*, not trained in the Jewish schools of the law, but this testimony could not be gainsaid. Note how fully the promise of Jesus to his disciples was fulfilled in this case (Matt. 10 : 19, 20).

**The Sanhedrin's Decision.**—The council decided that for the present, the thing to be done was to muzzle the teachers of this heresy. It was difficult, if not impossible, to convict them of even a technical offense against Jewish law; and it was impolitic to punish them in any case, "because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done." Peter and John were commanded to speak and teach no more in the name of Jesus, but in spite of all threats they firmly announced their purpose to continue their work, in the fear of God, not of man. It was a lame and impotent conclusion of the Sanhedrin's undertaking. Persecution, if it is to be begun, must be unflinching. It must count the cost and not shrink from blood. The only persecutions that have

been even temporarily effective have been ruthless—the persecutors have made a solitude and called it peace.

**The Second Outbreak.**—But a few weeks later the apostles (all of them, apparently, this time) were again arrested and cast into prison, from which they were miraculously released. Being again brought before the Sanhedrin, that body was this time minded to slay them, but was dissuaded by the advice of Gamaliel. Whether he was inspired of God or was merely worldly-wise, he gave the council advice that all would-be persecutors would have done well to ponder: "Refrain from these men and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God." The Sanhedrin so far heeded the advice as to refrain from severer measures than a beating and a repetition of the warning not to speak in the name of Jesus.

**Result of These Persecutions.**—The result upon the church was a fresh outpouring of the Holy Ghost, a new advance all along the line of service. After Pentecost three thousand were added to the church, but the result of this persecution was to add a multitude of believers, of whom the men alone were five thousand. So it has been in all ages; the blood of the martyrs has ever been the seed of the church. What men call heresy is like a fire-brand; the attempt to stamp it out by violence scatters the sparks wider, and in place of a small fire we have a great conflagration. Not only the spread of truth, but the spread of error is promoted by violence. Let truth and error come to a fair grapple and there can be no doubt of the result.

One who has once grasped the principle that the church consists of the regenerate solely, that men can become members of it only by virtue of their personal relation to Christ, necessarily becomes hostile to persecution in every form. Men may be persuaded, but they cannot be coerced into the kingdom of God. For a Baptist to advocate persecution is as illogical and suicidal as for a Unitarian to pray to the Triune God, or for a Roman Catholic to hold to the right of private judgment. Every manifestation of intolerance by a Baptist is a denial of his first principle. Peter, in his words to the Sanhedrin, asserted the true rule of action for the Christian: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." And obviously every man who asserts this right for himself is bound to grant it to everybody else.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see "Expositor's" Acts, chap. 9. On Sanhedrin, see Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." On the autonomy of the Jews at this time, see an essay by the author in the "Bibliotheca Sacra," October, 1882. The most eloquent plea for freedom of speech in our own, or in any language, is Milton's "Areopagitica." With this compare "Religion's Peace," by Leonard Busher, a Baptist, in the publications of the Hanserd Knollys Society, "Tracts on Liberty of Conscience."

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

What light does Josephus throw on the "captain of the temple" and his duties? 2. The prominence of Christ's resurrection in the apostolic preaching—Why? 3. When is resistance to the civil law by Christians justifiable? 4. Do any persecuting tendencies survive among us?

## IV.

### THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.

**The Unity of Believers.**—"Behold how these Christians love one another," was the testimony of heathendom to the early church. An exhibition of this mutual love is given us in this lesson. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." So it ever should be in Christ's church, and so far as this spirit is lacking the church is shorn of its power. It is selfishness and indifference in the church to-day that hinder the conversion of the world more than anything else that can be named. The form in which this unity was manifested in the church of Jerusalem was extraordinary, and deserves special study, both for its own interest and because it is held up to us by certain Christians as a model for all churches through all time. Baptists believe that New Testament precedent, when it is clear, is equally authoritative with New Testament precept, since it is the Holy Ghost teaching by example rather than by word. But a precedent to be of binding force on the church of all ages must be (*a*) general in the apostolic age, (*b*) based on a principle of permanent value, and (*c*) uncontradicted by positive apostolic teaching.

**Christian Communism.**—Will the so-called Christian communism of the church at Jerusalem bear these tests? Is it part of the common law of the New Testament, or is it an isolated practice rather disapproved than approved by other

precedent and teaching? As a help to the solution of this problem, note certain things.

1. This community of goods is not specifically commended by the author of the Acts. The facts are narrated and are left to make their own impression, as in many other cases. It is our right and duty, therefore, to interpret the facts in the light of other Scripture and of whatever other truth is known to us.

2. This community of goods is not known to have been practised anywhere else during the apostolic period. Not only is there a significant silence on this point, but the positive inference that communism did not prevail in other churches is warranted, and in some cases compelled, by what is actually said of them.

3. In this church communism had bad results. Almost immediately it caused jealousies and divisions, the Grecian Jews alleging that their widows were neglected, while the Hebrews received an undue share (Acts 6 : 1). A common fund quickly developed the more unlovely traits of unsanctified human nature in the saints at Jerusalem. It is so well adapted to produce that result everywhere, that only the most positive evidence would make one believe such an expedient to have the approval of God. But it had an even worse result: the church became permanently pauperized.[1] From this time on it made appeals for help to the rest of the brethren—appeals to which the other churches responded (1 Cor. 16 : 1), but which might have been unnecessary if a wiser policy had been pursued from the first. It is a most

[1] Of course persecution aggravated this evil, but other churches were persecuted without becoming pauperized.

delicate and difficult problem, how to help a man who is down without doing him more harm than good ; how to give him temporary assistance that will not deprive him of his self-respect and make him a beggar for life. Relief funds generally cause more misery than they relieve, by teaching people to depend on others. It is the testimony of men engaged for years in charitable work that the poverty of Chicago dates from the time when large relief funds were subscribed to help those made homeless by the great fire, so that what was intended to be a mercy became really a curse to the city. We are justified in doubting whether a plan that had so bad results in the one case in New Testament history where it was tried, had the sanction of God.

4. This community of goods appears to have been a temporary expedient even at Jerusalem. It was adopted because of the sudden increase of the church, to which by this time probably not fewer than ten thousand had been added, most of whom were by their change of faith cut off from their former means of livelihood, many of whom were Jews from a distance who had come up to attend the Pentecost celebration, and had remained in the city after their conversion. After the church had been compelled by persecution and the exhaustion of its resources to scatter, we hear no more of the community of goods.

5. The community was voluntary ; it was the spontaneous act of those who had property, not a law laid upon them by the apostles. This is clear in Peter's words to Ananias : "While it remained, did it not remain thine own ? and after it was sold was it not in thy power ?" The sacrifice was not enforced but voluntary, and in so far as it was an expression

of love for Christ and the brethren it is worthy of our admiration and emulation, even though as a scheme of Christian living it may be fatally defective.

6. It is, to say the least, not easily reconcilable with other New Testament teaching. "If a man will not work neither shall he eat" is a saying not popular among advocates of communism (2 Thess. 3 : 10–12; 1 Thess. 4 : 11, 12; Eph. 4 : 28).

**The Sin of Ananias and Sapphira.**—This sin was not theft, but falsehood. By keeping all or part of their property they defrauded nobody; by pretending to put all in the common fund, while they kept part for their own use, they lied to God. This is the first appearance in the church of that human depravity that has marred its history ever since. Ananias sinned because two vices had dominion over his soul: vanity and covetousness. He desired to obtain great credit for generosity and yet to keep his money. The sudden judgment that overtook him and his co-conspirator lends awful emphasis to our Lord's words, "Ye cannot serve God *and* mammon."

LITERATURE.

"Expositor's" Acts, chaps. 10, 11. See Tolstoi's "My Religion," for an advocacy of communism on alleged Christian principles. Stifler's, "Introduction to the Study of the Acts of the Apostles," sec. 3.

HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Jewish burial customs. 2. On what moral basis does the right of private property rest? 3. What does Paul teach regarding the sin of covetousness? 4. Are there other New Testament precedents not binding on the whole church for all time? Name some, and show why they lack binding force. 5. Name some precedents that are universally binding. Why?

# V.

## THE CHURCH ORGANIZED.

**Organization a growth.**—Every society is an organism, and is subject to the law of growth, of gradual evolution. The Church of Christ is no exception to this law. It was no more born full-grown than is a man. At first the assembly of the saints in Jerusalem was without organization, the apostles exercising the necessary functions of supervision and leadership. As the needs of the church manifested themselves, the organization was begun and perfected. This has been the law of the church life ever since. Those who believe that all progress stopped with the death of the apostles have imperfectly comprehended both the New Testament and the history of the church. Each age has its special needs, and each age will modify the organization of the church to suit those needs. This involves no infraction of the New Testament teaching or disregard of New Testament precedent. The apostolic church organization was very simple, yet exceedingly flexible, and has proved itself to be adapted to every succeeding age, without alteration of its essential principles.

**Rise of the Diaconate.**—The first office to be established was not, as we might have expected, the pastorate, but the diaconate. In the church of Jerusalem the apostles were both preachers and pastors of the flock, but the need of some one to "serve tables," to distribute from the com-

mon fund for the relief of the poor, was met by the appointment of the proper officers. In connection with this subject, note:

1. The deacons were not appointed by the apostles, but chosen by the church. The apostles did not even nominate the deacons; the church chose from their number seven men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." The democratic constitution of the church was recognized from the beginning.

2. The deacons were ordained to their office, *i. e.*, formally set apart to it by the laying on of hands and prayer. The laying on of hands was not regarded as conveying divine grace, but as symbolic of the grace to be bestowed in answer to prayer. There is reason to believe that it was always practised in the apostolic church whenever men were set apart to a special work (Acts 13 : 1–3). Query: Would not Baptists be more consistent observers of apostolic precedent, and would not the office of deacon be more respected, if deacons were thus solemnly set apart for their work in all our churches?

3. The primary duty of deacons was evidently to look after the poor. The qualifications for the office, as stated by the Apostle Paul (1 Tim. 3 : 8–13), are almost identical with those of bishops, with the exception that the deacon is not required to be "apt to teach." We may, perhaps, safely infer that there was a gradual extension of the deacon's functions in the New Testament period, until he came to be regarded as a helper of the pastor in all spiritual labor, but especially in visiting the sick and ministering to the poor. That deacons should assist the pastor in the celebration of

the Lord's Supper is an ancient custom, founded on obvious propriety rather than on Scripture.

4. In later New Testament times there were probably *deaconesses* also (Rom. 16 : 1, where the literal translation is, "Phœbe, our sister, who is a deaconess of the church that is at Cenchreæ"). Many scholars suppose that the "widows" of 1 Tim. 5 : 9 and "women" of 1 Tim. 3 : 11 must mean deaconesses. The latter seems probable, the former uncertain. This is a disputed question about which it does not become us to be too confident; but on the whole, there seems to be sufficient evidence to warrant any church in appointing deaconesses, if among its members are suitable women, and if their ministrations are likely to be useful.

**Rise of the Pastorate.**—The origin of the pastorate is more obscure. We first read of it during the missionary tour of Paul and Barnabas, "now having appointed for them elders in every church" (Acts 14 : 23). In this case also the need evolved the office. The apostles were evangelists; they founded churches, but could not be their permanent leaders. A resident pastor to feed the flock became a necessity. Note in this connection :

1. The official title of the pastor is "bishop" (*episkopos*, an overseer), or "elder" (*presbyteros*), the two terms being practically interchangeable (Acts 20 : 17, 28, where the same persons are called first presbyters and then bishops. See the Revised Version).

2. It is admitted by the best scholars of even Episcopal churches, that in the New Testament time "bishop" and "elder" were the same, and that the bishop had authority

over only a single church. The episcopate, as a separate order of the ministry, higher than the presbyter, was of post-apostolic development.

3. The bishops or elders were probably chosen by the churches (see especially Hackett on Acts 14 : 23), though the apostles naturally had great influence in the appointment of the first elders in a newly organized church.

4. In these churches of Asia Minor, if not generally in the New Testament churches, there was a plurality of elders (see also Acts 20 : 17 ; Titus 1 : 5).

5. The qualifications for the office and the work of the ministry, form the subject of the Apostle Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, and are summed up briefly in 1 Tim. 3 : 1-7.

6. It seems certain that bishops were solemnly set apart to their work by a public ceremony, the essential feature of which was the laying on of hands and prayer (1 Tim. 4 :14). In Baptist churches now, pastors are usually ordained only with the concurrence of sister churches, who send delegates for the purpose of examining the candidate and advising the church. But the church ordains, on the advice of the council usually ; the council does not and cannot ordain, since its function is merely advisory.

**The Evolution of Organization.**—This simple organization sufficed for the needs of apostolic times. It has proved itself flexible enough for all times. The New Testament leaves each local church, and the churches of Christ as a whole, a great measure of liberty with regard to organization, provided there be no departure from this essential simplicity. The two great features of modern life are

co-operation and specialization, and the churches have evolved a somewhat complex system of organization along these two lines. *Within the church* is specialization ; the Sunday-school, the missionary society, the temperance society, the young people's society, the Boy's Brigade—all these are classifications of the members for the work to which each is best adapted. So long as these societies are organic parts of the local church and subject to its authority, not independent entities, they do not clash with the scriptural idea of the church. There are indefinite liberty and flexibility in this direction. *Outside of the church* is co-operation : Associations, State Conventions, national missionary societies —these are combinations of effort that are lawful to any extent that is expedient, provided they are voluntary associations of the churches, without legislative power except for themselves.

## LITERATURE.

Chap. 13 in " Expositor's" Acts. On the general subject of church organization see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 13; Jacob's " Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament " ; Hatch's " Organization of the Early Christian Church " ; Schaff's " History of the Christian Church," vol. I., chap. 10.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Is " board of deacons " a good Baptist phrase, *i. e.*, does it represent a scriptural idea ? 2. What are the limitations of pastoral authority in the church ? 3. Is more or less specialization of work within the church expedient ? 4. Is there any dangerous tendency toward denominational centralization in our State and national organizations ? 5. Should ministers coming to us from other churches be ordained ?

## VI.

### STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

**The Second Jewish Persecution.**—The first persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem was set on foot by the Sadducees, because the apostles preached the doctrine of the resurrection. The Pharisees were then either neutral or favored the persecuted sect. No long time passed, however, before the Pharisees also became hostile to the new faith. Few marks of chronology are afforded us in this part of the Acts, but the chronological schemes covering the apostolic church allow not less than three years between Pentecost and the death of Stephen, the latter event being placed as early as A. D. 33, and as late as A. D. 35. Five years are not too long a time to account for the growth of the church and the gradual increase of exasperated bitterness necessary, before the Pharisees were ready for the final step. The disputations described in Acts 6 : 9, 10 must have continued some time and with increasing acrimony. It was the elders and the scribes—*i. e.*, those learned in the law—who finally took action.

**The Accused and the Charge.**—The accused was evidently the same Stephen who had not long before been chosen a deacon of the church in Jerusalem. At this time, the office of deacon was not incompatible with the performance of certain functions afterward limited by general consent to bishops; for Stephen preached, and Philip both preached

and administered ordinances (Acts 8 : 38). Stephen was evidently a remarkable man. He is never mentioned but with special distinction as a man "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit," and from his speech we know him to have also been learned in the Jewish Scriptures, though almost certainly of Hellenistic origin—*i. e.*, speaking Greek instead of Hebrew, or rather Aramaic. The charge, as in the case of the charges brought against Christ, though false in its exaggerated form, doubtless had a basis of truth. That he spoke words really "blasphemous" (calumnious) against Moses and the temple and the law, is incredible ; but he may have taught things that seemed to a Pharisee to merit this description. As Paul taught later, he probably maintained that in Christ the law had been fulfilled ; that the significance having departed from Mosaic ritual it would and should cease ; and he may have repeated our Lord's prediction of the temple's destruction. This it would be easy for religious hate to distort into the form given in Acts 6 : 13, 14, and this would account for the zeal of the Pharisees against one who thus attacked the very basis of their religion of ceremonies.

**Stephen's Defense before the Sanhedrin.**—The speech made in his defense is very fully reported, and still it is incomplete, for he was not suffered to finish it. As a defense, it is admirable ; considered as a speech, it lacks finish and coherence. Its main thought is plain : Stephen retorts upon his accusers the charge that he has lacked reverence for God, or God's law. He shows that they, and not he, have had a false view of the old dispensation ; and that the Jews, throughout their history, far from manifesting a true zeal for the temple and the law, had shown an ingratitude

and unbelief that became more flagrant in proportion as the promises were fulfilled or given with greater fullness. In other words, he answers the charge of blaspheming the temple and the law by showing what is the true significance of both law and temple. The effectiveness of the defense was shown by the anger with which it was received—it was unanswerable, so they killed him.

This scene has furnished the theme for the song of many Christian poets, none of whom, however, has caught its spirit more fully, or expressed it more exquisitely than Tennyson in his "Two Voices":

> I cannot hide that some have striven,
> Achieving calm, to whom was given
> The joy that mixes man with heaven:
> . . . . . .
> Which did accomplish their desire,
> Bore and forebore, and did not tire;
> Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.
>
> He heeded not reviling tones,
> Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
> Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones:
>
> But looking upward, full of grace,
> He pray'd, and from a happy place
> God's glory smote him on the face.

In a sense, the Sanhedrin was not responsible for the death of Stephen. No judicial condemnation was pronounced; he was seized in an outburst of mad passion, carried outside of the city, and stoned by a mob. This was a lynching, not an execution, which is perhaps the reason why the Jews were not called to account by the Roman governor. A procurator

would naturally be careless if it came to his knowledge unofficially that in a quarrel between these despised Jews one of their number had been slain. It is noteworthy that the common people participated in this violence, and seemed generally to approve it. Hitherto they had held the Christians in high favor, but now their religious intolerance had been excited by the report that these teachers threatened the permanence of their temple and its rites, and their former favor was turned to hatred.

**Difficulties of the Speech.**—Stephen's references to the Old Testament history differ from the Old Testament record in many particulars. Some of these variations are due to the fact that Stephen probably used and quoted from the Septuagint version, instead of the original Hebrew. A few cases are expansions of the original text, due perhaps to current tradition among the Jews, or to comparison of the Prophets with the Pentateuch. Such instances are what Stephen says of the Egyptian education of Moses (compare Exod. 4 : 10), his greatness, learning, and eloquence (compare Acts 7 : 21, 22 with Exod. 2 : 10 and 4 : 10), the intervention of angels in the giving of the law (Exod. 19 : 16). More difficult to deal with than these additions to the Old Testament text are certain cases in which Stephen seems to contradict the record. For example, the call of Abraham (comp. Acts 7 : 2 with Gen. 12 : 1), the death of Abraham's father (Acts 7 : 4, Gen. 12 : 2-5) and the purchase of the tomb at Shechem (Acts 7 : 16, Gen. 23 : 17). The chronology given by Stephen, three periods of forty years (ver. 23, 30, 36), if not actually at variance with that of the Pentateuch, is supported by the original record only in the last instance.

With regard to these difficulties, it may be said: 1. The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture does not mean that everything contained in it is true and inspired, but only that the writer was inspired to give a true account. Some things recorded in Scripture were evidently not inspired (the sayings and doings of wicked men, for instance) but the record is nevertheless the result of inspiration. 2. That Luke was inspired to report this speech and has done so with substantial verbal correctness cannot be successfully questioned, unless we reject altogether the doctrine of inspiration. 3. That Stephen was himself inspired, in any such sense as to preserve him from ordinary slips of memory in quotation, is nowhere stated or implied. 4. These discrepancies between the speech of Stephen and the Old Testament concern only minor matters of dates and the exact order of events, and in no wise relate to the general accuracy of his statements or the conclusiveness of his arguments. 5. The existence of these slight discrepancies testifies to the accuracy of Luke's report. Had he undertaken to tell us not what Stephen said but what he thought Stephen should have said, he would have carefully eliminated such discrepancies as well as given to the speech more finish and logical coherence.

**A Young Man Named Saul.**—The death of Stephen seemed an overwhelming blow to the Christians of Jerusalem, but in the providence of God, it became the salvation of the church instead of its destruction. It brought to a close the first period in the history of the apostolic church. During this period the disciples had been witnesses in Jerusalem exclusively, tarrying there in the vain hope of winning

to the new faith a large body of those who were their brethren after the flesh. It was now evident that the religion of the Christ had no chance of acceptance in Jerusalem, either among the leaders of the Jews, or among the common people; it remained for the disciples to take a forward step in obedience to Christ and become his witnesses on a broader field. This new movement demanded a leader, and a leader was soon to be found among the persecutors of Stephen. "A young man named Saul," is now first mentioned in the narrative. Professor Wilkinson, in his "Epic of Saul," supposes that Saul had been one of Stephen's chief opponents and had been defeated by Stephen in public disputation. This is a permissible use of the imagination by a poet, and the historian finds nothing in the narrative inconsistent with such a story. Highly probable it seems to be, that Stephen's death had much to do with Saul's conversion. So it has ever been in the history of the church; as one leader falls God raises up another to carry on his work.

## LITERATURE.

Taylor's "Paul the Missionary," chap. 1; Conybeare and Howson, chap. 2; chap. 14, in "Expositor's" Acts; Farrar's "Life and Work of the Apostle Paul," chap. 8. On the general subject of discrepancies in the text of Scripture, see Haley's "Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible." For a study of the character of Stephen, see Wilkinson's "Epic of Saul." For valuable comments on Stephen, his speech, his martyrdom, consult Clark's "Harmonic Arrangement of the Acts," pp. 160-168. On the Sanhedrin and its constitution, see Schurer's "Jewish People in the Time of Christ," §. 23.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Who were the Libertines, and what light does this passage throw on Paul's Roman citizenship? (See Hackett and compare Conybeare and Howson.) 2. Make a paraphrase of Stephen's argument, condensing his historical references. 3. What was the state of the church of Jerusalem at the end as compared with the beginning of this period? 4. What was the cause of the changed attitude of the common people toward Christianity?

# PART II

# THE GOSPEL IN ASIA

"And in all Judea and Samaria."

A. D. 36–50.

# VII.

## CHRISTIANITY BECOMES A MISSIONARY RELIGION.

**The Effect of the Persecution.**—The hatred of the Pharisees toward the followers of Jesus did not abate with the death of Stephen. Though his martyrdom was in part the result of sudden passion, it was also a mark of fixed purpose, and not rage against a single person. The Pharisees had determined upon nothing less than the extirpation of this heresy, and they went about the matter with system as well as with determination. No sooner was Stephen buried than a general persecution of his brethren began. Conspicuously active in this work was Saul, whose part in the death of Stephen seems to have been that of a passive yet approving spectator. He now made havoc of the church, pursuing Christians to their homes and casting them into prison.

The disciples in Jerusalem therefore dispersed, becoming preachers of the gospel wherever they went. Many of them, it is plain from the preceding chapters, had come to Jerusalem from homes elsewhere, to attend the feast of Pentecost; and, having been converted, had tarried in the city. Now they would naturally return to their previous place of residence and carry with them the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ. Thus this persecution, which seemed at first likely to prove fatal to the church, in fact insured its

perpetuity. Had the disciples been permitted to tarry peacefully in Jerusalem, they might have forgotten or disobeyed the last injunction of their Lord—"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." The minds of the apostles had been greatly enlarged by the teachings of their Master, but they were yet in bondage to their narrow Jewish ideas. They still regarded the gospel as a message to the Jews, chiefly if not exclusively; they had yet to grasp the idea that the religion of Christ is a missionary religion or nothing—that the Son of God made atonement for the sins of the whole world. By repeated strokes of discipline, by numerous developments of his providence, God was compelled to teach this lesson to men very unwilling to learn it. We can see, therefore, that this persecution was a necessary step in the development of Christianity. Grievous at the time, it brought forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in all following years.

Baptists are forbidden to persecute by their fundamental principle that the church consists only of those regenerated by the Spirit of God. This being true, men cannot be compelled to become members of the church; each man's spiritual state is a matter between himself and God alone. To persecute is to attempt to bring the unregenerate into the church. But even if Baptists were not thus estopped by principle from persecution, they should be warned against it by the fact that it has been so unsuccessful in all the ages. It has seldom suppressed what the persecutors regarded as heresy, but it has often scattered the heretics and promoted the spread of their teaching in regions to which otherwise it might never have penetrated.

**Philip in Samaria.**—Philip, one of the deacons of the church at Jerusalem, seems for a time to have stepped into the place made vacant by the death of Stephen. He preached in the capital of Samaria, and wrought miracles as signs of divine approval of his teaching. The people with one accord gave heed, and many believed and were baptized, "both men and women." (Note again that there is no sign of the baptism here of any but adult believers—all the baptized were *believers* at all events.) It is not said who baptized them, but it is fair to infer that Philip did, for we read of nobody else in connection with this first work in Samaria; and a little later we find him baptizing the eunuch. We do not know that there were at this time in Samaria any ministers or "bishops," if there were yet such officers anywhere,—they were not needed until there were churches,—and the functions afterward committed to them were necessarily performed either by the apostles or by believers who had not been set apart to the ministerial office and work. Philip's case, however, certainly proves that in an emergency any believer may administer the ordinances of the Christian church—even without the authorization of a church, if there is no church to authorize him. Any Christian man who should find himself beyond the pale of civilization and churches, and should preach and gather around him believers, would need no ordination or authority save his Christian discipleship, to baptize them and help them to organize themselves into a Christian church, and such a church would be just as "regular" and "valid" as any other in the world. As a matter of good order, in our churches in general, it is proper that the administration of

the ordinances should be committed to the ministry. But there is an important difference between good order and divine right.

**The Sin of Simon.**—The apostles do not seem in this case, as they did in others, to have hesitated to accept this work as of God, for they sent Peter and John to carry it still further. The Samaritans had already received the Holy Spirit, in that they had been converted, but not with the power of Pentecost as a miraculous attestation of their faith. This gift was now bestowed upon them, in answer to the prayer of the apostles. One Simon, a sorcerer by profession, who had been supposed to manifest the great power of God, is said to have been among those who "believed" in consequence of Philip's preaching, but it is evident that this means no more than that he became a professed believer and was baptized on such profession. To the real power of the gospel he was a stranger, as was speedily shown. Greatly impressed by the results of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit—which here, as at Jerusalem, probably was followed by the speaking with tongues and possibly by the power of working miracles in some cases—and mistakenly supposing that the apostles had the power to confer this gift on whomsoever they would, he offered them money. He doubtless thought that this was some magical power whose secret they could impart to him; and that if he were able at will to confer the gift of the Holy Spirit, it would become a great source of revenue to him. The stern rebuke of the apostles certainly awakened his fears, as his reply showed; but had his subsequent history evidenced any real penitence, we can hardly conceive that Luke should have failed to record

such a fact. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter," seems to be the final word.

NOTE.—Simony, or the sin of trafficking in sacred things, is a sin that has largely prevailed in the corrupted churches, particularly in the church of Rome. The sacraments of that church have been openly sold for money in many periods of her history, and practices that can hardly be distinguished from such sale still exist. It was the sale of indulgences for money by Tetzel that precipitated the Reformation. In all countries where church establishments prevail, simony takes the form of buying and selling ecclesiastical preferment. Although it is now contrary to law, livings in the church of England are still bought and sold, and until recently the "advowson," or right of presentation, was as much property as a church pew, and could be as lawfully bought and sold. Similar abuses have at times prevailed in the church of Scotland.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, chap. 18 of the "Expositors'" Acts will be found particularly stimulating and useful. See also "Philip the Evangelist" in Smith; Neander's "Planting and Training of the Christian Church," book II. On the Jewish proselytes, see Schürer's "Jewish People in the Time of Christ," § 31, 5; and compare Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 7. Stifler's "Introduction," § 8, will be found helpful in connection with Lessons 6, 7, and 8.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. In what defect of character did Simon's sin originate? 2. Had the apostles alone the power to confer the gift of the Spirit as is claimed by Romanists and High Churchmen? 3. What were the "unclean spirits" mentioned in verse 7? 4. Which was *the* city of Samaria at that time, and what names did it bear? 5. Mention other historical instances in which God made persecution the means of spreading his truth.

# VIII.

## PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH.

**The Eunuch a Type.**—The historic importance of this lesson consists not in the rank and power of this eunuch, but in his representative character. When Philip met him he was reading aloud from the Old Testament, or at least from the roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. This, it is probable, he was reading in the Septuagint (or Greek) version, since there is no reason to suppose that either he or Philip could read the original Hebrew. It is quite safe to infer from his possession of, and interest in this Scripture, that he was a convert to the Jewish religion. The number of such converts was very large in the apostolic times. There were not only the "proselytes of righteousness"—or those who had become Jews to the full, and obeyed the whole law—but also those "devout" men and women who accepted the Hebrew doctrine of monotheism, yet did not profess to observe all the Mosaic ceremonial requirements.

Between these two extremes there were many gradations. There were numerous Romans like the centurion of Luke 7 : 2–10, of whom the Jews themselves said, "He is worthy . . . for he loveth our nation and himself built us our synagogue." Such attended the Jewish synagogue worship, were known as "devout," God-fearing men (Acts 10 : 2), and taught the truth to those under them (Acts 10 : 7, 8). Though generally friendly to these converts, the Jews still

regarded them as Gentiles, with whom it was not lawful for a strict Jew to eat (Acts 10 : 28). There were instances, indeed, in which men were made proselytes by force, and Judaism at one time showed a tendency to propagate itself by the sword, as Mohommedanism did later. The Idumæans, according to Josephus, were offered the choice between death, exile, and circumcision, and during the Maccabean period the Ituræans were "converted" in the same forcible way.

Among these converts the apostles naturally found the most willing hearers of the gospel of Christ. The "devout" Gentile had adopted the precious truth of Judaism—he had learned to worship the true God and had renounced his idols and heathen superstitions. He believed in the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, and yet in their interpretation was free from rabbinical subtleties and traditions. He lacked the race jealousy of the Jew, the bigoted adherence to a preconceived notion of the Messiah that prevented the mass of the chosen people from accepting Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God. Accordingly, we find that wherever the apostles preached, the gospel found a ready reception among this class.

Of this particular man we know only what Luke's text tells us. From his being called an Ethiopian we need not infer that he was a negro; the word may denote either residence or extraction. He was in the service of the Queen of Ethiopia ("Candace" is the name of a dynasty, like "Pharaoh" or "Cæsar," not of a person), and "of great authority."

**The Preaching of Philip.**—Philip "beginning from

this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus." From what has preceded, we may accurately infer the character of this preaching. It was very like that of the risen Lord, when he discoursed to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24 : 25–27). Its chief element was the exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures as they related to the person and work of the Christ of God, in this conforming to what we have seen to be characteristics of the apostolic preaching generally. We may also infer, perhaps, that this instruction included some mention of baptism as the appointed mode of confessing Christ before the world ; otherwise it is difficult to account for the question of the eunuch in ver. 36. The teaching of Philip bore immediate fruit ; falling into a heart already prepared for its reception by the Spirit of God, the good seed of the kingdom sprang up at once. As Christian workers we may learn this lesson from the conversion of the eunuch : Whenever the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts, impelling us to join ourselves to some one and tell him of Christ, we are warranted in believing that the same Spirit has been working in the heart of that one, preparing him to receive the message we are bidden deliver. No one who has had much experience in personal work among the unconverted will question this, and the inexperienced may find in this truth a stimulus that will overcome their timidity in speaking to men of Christ.

**The Baptism.**—The simplicity and clearness of this narrative make certain things very plain to one who will read it with an open mind :

1. This baptism was an immersion. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find any question regarding this in a com-

mentary on the Acts by a scholar of high standing. The remark of Dean Plumptre will serve as an example of what Pedobaptist scholars in general say of this passage, when they do not take refuge in a significant silence: "The Greek preposition might mean simply '*unto* the water,' but the universality of immersion in the practice of the early church supports the English version. The eunuch would lay aside his garments, descend chest deep into the water, and be plunged under it 'in the name of the Lord Jesus'; the only formula recognized in the Acts. So it was, in the half-playful language in which many of the Fathers delighted, that 'the Ethiopian changed his spots.'" The only ground for questioning the character of the act, is a supposed difficulty about the lack of water in this "desert." But any tract of land thinly settled or unfit for tillage was a "desert" in the New Testament usage. There were, and still are, several roads from Jerusalem to Gaza, and none of them is a desert in the sense we now commonly attach to the term—an arid and uninhabitable waste, without vegetation or water. There are fountains at several places on these roads, issuing from a perennial source, and forming brooks or pools. Dr. Robinson (a Presbyterian) supposes the site of the baptism to have been "somewhere southwest of Lâtrôn," and adds: "There is a fine stream of water, called Mârûbah, deep enough in some places even in June to satisfy the utmost wishes of our Baptist friends." This supposed difficulty vanishes, like many others of the same sort, in the presence of fuller knowledge.

2. It was the baptism of a believer—that is, of one who made a personal and credible profession of his faith in

Christ. There are instances in the New Testament—Simon, the sorcerer, is a notable case—of the baptism of those who professed belief, whose profession was credible at the time, but afterward turned out to be false. When Baptists speak of their churches as organized on a spiritual basis, consisting only of the regenerate, they do not mean to imply that persons actually unregenerate never obtain membership in them ; but only that those known to be unregenerate are not received. No church can do more than require a credible profession of faith from candidates for baptism. God alone reads the heart. The confession of the eunuch is plain, whether ver. 37 is genuine or not. The prevailing view now among New Testament scholars is, that this verse did not form part of the original writing of Luke, but was inserted from some early baptismal liturgy. But if this theory is true, it indicates that *baptism on profession of faith was the general usage of the early church*, otherwise such an interpolation could never have been made.

3. The baptism followed immediately on the eunuch's profession of faith. So far as the record shows, it lacked the authority of any church or ecclesiastic, and was administered by one who is not known to have received ordination as a minister. These facts constitute part of the common law of the New Testament regarding the administration of the ordinances. They show that the usage of later times, doubtless established early for the sake of good order, of restricting the administration of the ordinances to the ministry, and of administering them only by authority of a church, was not uniform in New Testament times, especially in the earlier years of the church. Even Baptists some-

times forget that their tradition has not the force of law, and sometimes forget to be scrupulously exact in adherence to their principle that the New Testament is the supreme authority in faith and *practice*.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see chap. 20 in the "Expositor's" Acts; Thatcher's "Sketch of the History of the Apostolic Church," chap. 2, on "The Expansion of Judaism."

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. What was the status of the "devout?" and what wasexpected of them in the keeping of the law? 2. What important bearing has this on the history of the apostolic Christianity? 3. The baptism of proselytes among the Jews—its forms and history? 4. Why is the genuineness of ver. 37 doubted?

# IX.

## THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.

**Saul's Previous Life.**—Saul was born in Tarsus, one of the great cities of Asia Minor, as celebrated for wealth and culture as Athens or Alexandria. From a comparison of Acts 7 : 58 with Philem. 9, we may fairly infer that he was born a few years later than Jesus. His family were probably Hellenists and Pharisees (Phil. 3 : 5). Every Jewish boy was taught a trade, and Saul was taught tent-making, an extensive industry of Tarsus, the long fine hair of the goats of that region being employed in making the tents. Of the father we know only that he was a strict Hebrew, and a Roman citizen (Acts 22 : 28); the mother is barely mentioned, and nothing is known of her. Saul would naturally get his early education in the family and at the synagogue school; though there were excellent Greek schools and even a university in Tarsus, he would probably not be allowed to attend these. Still, he would naturally acquire something of Greek learning, though his few quotations show no wide acquaintance with Greek literature. At an early age, about thirteen, according to Jewish custom, he would be sent to Jerusalem to be instructed in the college of rabbis, at that time presided over by the noted Gamaliel (Acts 22 : 3), still known among the Jews as the Great Rabbi. Large inferences are warranted as to his ability and progress in learning from the fact that while still "a young man" he occupied

so prominent a place and became the leader in the persecution of the Christians. His mastery of the Scripture and thorough knowledge of rabbinical lore are shown in his extant writings.

**On the Way to Damascus.**—Bearing letters from the Sanhedrin to the synagogues of Damascus, Saul set out on his self-imposed task of extirpating the Christian heresy among the Jews of the dispersion. As he journeyed, "a bright light gleamed around him," which Paul afterward called a powerful light (Acts 22 : 6), exceeding the splendor of the noonday sun (26 : 13). He heard also a voice out of heaven, speaking words audible to him though not to those about him. These heard the voice, however, and doubtless saw the light. This appearance was not a mere subjective illusion (which means delusion) on the part of Saul, as some have inferred, though the appearance of Jesus was to him alone. The physical impressions—the falling from the horse, the sudden blindness—of this vision were not less striking than the spiritual. It does not appear that Saul's conversion was accomplished on the spot, but his conviction was sudden, complete, overwhelming. He saw at once that while verily believing he was doing God service he had been fighting against God. What meditations, what bitterness of soul, what struggles with pride, those three days and nights witnessed, when he neither ate nor drank, but continued in prayer before God! The complete change does not seem to have come until Ananias laid hands on him, that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Then there fell from his eyes as it were scales—and as the light of day broke once more on his sight, "the light of the knowl-

edge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" flooded his spiritual vision. He arose and was baptized; his first act, even before taking food, being to confess publicly the Christ whom he had before dishonored.

**Saul, the Christian Preacher.**—There is some difficulty in arranging the chronology of Luke's account so as to harmonize with Paul's own narrative in Gal. 1 : 11–24. It seems probable, however, that the preaching in Damascus, recorded by Luke, began immediately after Saul's conversion. Not only is this implied in the "straightway" of ver. 20, but in all the following circumstances—the amazement of the Jews at this man's sudden conversion, and their vivid recollection of his former persecutions of Christians. Resentment against this change of allegiance would naturally lead to the plot to kill him. From this danger he was saved by the ready wit of some unnamed disciple, whose house overhung the wall. Paul was let down in a basket through a window (2 Cor. 11 : 33) through a wall, and to this day travelers are shown the place in the wall of Damascus by which, according to tradition, he escaped.

**Saul in Arabia.**—Between ver. 25 and 26, however, there intervenes a period of "three years," which, after the Hebrew custom of reckoning, might be only one full year and parts of two others. During this time Saul was in Arabia. What he was doing in this period of retirement we do not positively know; the general view of Christian scholars has been that he spent this time, not in conferring with flesh and blood, but in communion of spirit with Christ himself, directly from whom he ever afterward professed to have received his gospel. In meditation and prayer and renewed

study of the Scripture, we may conceive of him as preparing himself for his lifelong work of preaching the gospel. After this preparation he returned to Damascus, where his visit was probably brief, and thence he went to Jerusalem to visit Peter, by whom he was hospitably received, and with whom he tarried fifteen days (Gal. 1 : 18). The other disciples, however, as Luke tells us, were afraid of him, and very naturally ; they had heard much of Saul the persecutor, but little of Saul the disciple, and were fearful that his profession of faith in Christ was the ruse of an unscrupulous enemy. Then Barnabas did a noble thing ; he introduced Saul to the other apostles and vouched for the genuineness of his conversion. The time of this visit to Jerusalem is usually placed at about A. D. 39. During this brief stay at Jerusalem, Saul preached the gospel, especially to the Hellenists. He had not been long engaged in this work when the Jews plotted to kill him. The brethren advised him to depart, and he departed from the city, partly in comformity with their advice, but also because informed in a vision (Acts 22 : 17) that God would have him work elsewhere. It was fourteen years before he revisited the city.

**Saul in Syria and Cilicia.**—For the next four or five years, Saul preached the gospel in his native country. Luke gives us scanty information about this work, for his history turns aside for a time from the labors of Saul to follow the work of Peter and describe the problem that confronted the churches of Christ when the Gentiles began to accept the gospel. That these were busy years for Saul we learn from his own words (Gal. 1 : 21–23), and we know the character of the man too well to suppose that he could be idle so long

if we had no information whatever about him. The extent of his labors and their results we may in part infer from Acts 15 : 23–41. The churches afterward found in Cilicia can be accounted for on no plausible ground save their having been established by Saul during these years. Dean Howson pertinently suggests that, at this time, "some of these Christian 'kinsmen' whose names are handed down to us (Rom. 16 : 7, 11, 21), possibly his sister, the playmate of his childhood, and his sister's son, who afterward saved his life (Acts 23 : 16 seq.), may have been gathered by his exertions into the fold of Christ."

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see Conybeare and Howson's "Life of Paul," chap. 3; Taylor's "Paul, the Missionary," chap. 2; Stalker's "Life of Paul," chap. 2; Thatcher's "Apostolic Church," chap. 3; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 10. See also Schürer's "Jewish People in the Time of Christ," especially § 22, on "The State of Culture in General," and §§ 26–30. On the different accounts of Paul's conversion, see Clark's "Harmonic Arrangement of the Acts," pp. 172–174.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. What other arrangement of the chronology might be made? 2. Write out, as nearly as may be in the exact words of Luke and Paul, a connected narrative of Paul's life after his conversion, down to the point we have reached. 3. Where was Paul during the ministry of Jesus?

# X.

## THE GENTILES RECEIVE THE GOSPEL.

**Peter at Lydda and Joppa.**—The time of the occurrences related in Acts 10–12, is approximately fixed by the fact that Herod became king of Palestine early in A. D. 41, and died in the summer of A. D. 44. The first part of these three years was a period of peace and rapid growth. Peter improved this opportunity to make a missionary tour among all the saints in Syria. We have particulars of his labors in two places. Lydda is on the ancient line of travel from Jerusalem and Cæsarea. His tour was marked by the working of two notable miracles—the healing of a paralytic at Lydda, and the raising from the dead of Tabitha, or Dorcas. We are told that in the case of both these "signs," many were convinced by them and believed in Christ. That Peter was fast emancipating himself from narrow Jewish prejudices is shown by his staying at Joppa with one Simon, a tanner. This occupation was regarded as unclean by strict Jews, and those engaged in it were avoided by scrupulous observers of tradition.

**The Vision of Cornelius.**—Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian cohort, then stationed at Cæsarea, was one of those Romans who had learned from the Jews to worship the true God. He was a fair type of those converts who had not sought to become Hebrews, but honestly tried to serve God in the station where he had placed them. He was still

a Gentile and a heathen, therefore, in the opinion of the strict Jews; and it was no more lawful to hold ordinary social intercourse with him than with any other Gentile. He was a devout man, and his prayers and alms had commended him to the favor of God, as tokens of his sincerity; God was now minded to bring him into the full light of his truth. A vision was given to Cornelius in which he was commanded to send for Peter, and he obeyed without questioning what he recognized as the will of God.

**The Vision of Peter.**—At the same time the Spirit of God was working on the mind of Peter, to prepare him to accept this invitation—which, left to himself, we may believe he would have declined. Peter was praying at the noon hour on the flat housetop of his host's residence—doubtless screened, like Oriental housetops in general, by a balustrade, and often used as a place of prayer. Here, as Neander happily says, "The divine light that was making its way to his spirit revealed itself in the mirror of sensible images which proceeded from the existing state of his bodily frame." He beheld in a vision a great vessel, containing all manner of living things, and heard a voice saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." And when his Jewish training inspired the reply, "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean," it was only to be rebuked by the divine word, "What God hath cleansed make not thou common."

**Peter Obeys the Vision.**—The significance of this vision was immediately made clear to the wondering Peter by the coming of the messengers from Cornelius. Let it always be remembered to the honor of Peter that he hesitated

not a moment. Though the voice of the Spirit commanded him to lay aside the prejudices of a lifetime, and transgress what he had been taught in the name of God from his youth up, he obeyed. Certain brethren accompanied him, to whom the apostle afterward appealed for confirmation of his account (Acts 11 : 1, 12). When Cornelius presented himself before him—doing homage in the Oriental manner, not "worshiping" him as a religious act, which would be incompatible with the character of Cornelius—Peter declined this homage, which might easily be mistaken for the reverence due to God alone. It is worthy of note, in this connection, that Jesus never forbade any act of homage or respect offered to him—a fact that clearly signifies his consciousness that he was worthy of the worship of men.

**Conversion and Baptism of Cornelius.**—On learning from Cornelius why he had been summoned, Peter immediately preached Christ to the centurion and those who had assembled at the latter's house. Being already a servant of God, according to his light, Cornelius needed only to be fully enlightened to become a Christian. The gospel of Christ fell upon his soul like water on the parched earth; it was the truth for which he had been groping, and he accepted it without question or hesitation. While yet the apostle was speaking, the power of the Holy Ghost came upon those that believed, so that they spoke with tongues and glorified God, to the great amazement of the Jews present. Obviously, there could be no objection to the baptism of these believers, for who on earth has the right to reject those on whom God has put the seal of acceptance? Cornelius and his believing friends were therefore baptized.

Here note once more that only believers who had received the Holy Ghost were baptized; and that the baptism was administered at once by the apostle, without any ecclesiastical formalities whatsoever.

**The Effect on the Church.**—When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he found his action sharply questioned by the Jewish Christians. His defense consisted simply in a recital of the facts, without argument, save in his closing words: "Forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?" The question was not merely pertinent, it was unanswerable, and they criticised Peter no further, but glorified God, saying, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Thenceforth there was no question among Christians that the gospel was to be preached to Gentile as well as Jew. This conversion of Cornelius, therefore, marks an era in the history of the church, and completes the forward step taken when the apostles preached the gospel in Samaria. It fixed permanently the character of Christianity as a missionary religion—not the religion of one favored nation, or of an age, but for all the world and for all time.

It is true that the status of Gentile Christians was not fixed by this recognition that they had a right to the gospel. Prejudice dies hard, and religious prejudice is particularly long-lived. The idea that Christianity was a sort of graft upon Judaism was very slow in disappearing, and remnants of it may be traced to the very close of the apostolic period. There were few Jews as yet who had grasped the whole truth, and even Peter was not one of them, as his subsequent con-

duct proved. It was reserved for Paul, as we shall see later, to show the true relation of Christianity to Judaism, to teach that the law was fulfilled in Christ, and that the believer in him is no longer under the bondage of the law. For the time the prevailing opinion among the Jewish Christians was that Gentiles who believed on Christ and were baptized should also become Jews and keep the whole law; and for many years afterward this was the contention of a large party in the church, though it never had the sanction of the church as a whole.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 4; Stalker, chap. 4; Taylor, chap. 3; Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 9. On the relation of Gentile Christians to the Jews and to Jewish Christians, see Lechler's "Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times," First Part, chap. 2.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. What was the nature of the "visions" described in this lesson? 2. Does God now reveal his will through dreams? 3. What are we to learn from this lesson regarding God's method of revealing his truth? 4. What bearing, if any, has the case of Cornelius on devout men who never hear the gospel of Christ?

# XI.

## A YEAR AT ANTIOCH.

**The Gospel in Antioch—Barnabas.**—Luke now turns back to resume his account of the labors of the scattered disciples in Syria. Antioch was the capital of this province and the residence of the Roman governor. It was reckoned the Rome of the Orient. When the preachers arrived at Antioch is not definitely stated. The church at Jerusalem, as we see from such passages as Acts 11 : 22, both assumed and was accorded a kind of primacy among the early churches. It does not appear that it interfered in any way with their independence, but as the mother church its advice was sought and its leadership was followed by the other churches. The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to see the things of which they had heard. This is not the first time that we read of Barnabas, but we are now told more about him. His action toward Saul showed the native nobleness and generosity of his character, and now it is added that "he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." His name was originally Joses or Joseph, but because of his eloquence in exhortation he was surnamed "Son of Consolation." He was one of the first to sell his property for the general good of the church (Acts 4 : 37). His preaching at Antioch was so blessed that "much people was added to the Lord."

**Paul in Antioch.**—But Barnabas felt the need of a

helper, and naturally turned to Paul, who was from the first recognized as the special apostle to the Gentiles. Barnabas, like many men distinguished for the warmth of their emotions and power of oratory, seems to have been impulsive and deficient in practical wisdom. This was Paul's strong side, and the two men admirably supplemented each other. Barnabas therefore sought out Paul, who was at Tarsus. "He needed assistance, he needed the presence of one whose wisdom was greater than his own, whose zeal was an example to all, and whose peculiar mission had been miraculously declared. Paul recognized the voice of God in the words of Barnabas, and the two friends traveled in all haste to the Syrian metropolis." (Conybeare and Howson.) "And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people."

This was probably A. D. 44, and it was a critical time in the history of Christianity. It is hardly too much to say that, humanly speaking, this year insured the perpetuity of Christianity. Ten years or more had passed since our Lord's death and resurrection, and now, here at Antioch, his disciples were first called by his name. The name, as it is given by Luke, betrays a Latin rather than a Greek origin. We may safely conjecture that it was given to the followers of Christ by the heathen people of Antioch, rather than assumed by the former in the first place; but whether it was originally a mere descriptive epithet or a term of reproach and ridicule, it was soon adopted by believers everywhere as their proper name. It is this, no doubt, to which the Apostle James refers when he speaks of "the worthy name by which ye are called" (James 2 : 7).

But this year at Antioch did much more than give a name to the new religion; it prepared the way for a great forward missionary movement, which resulted before the close of the century in the preaching of the gospel throughout the Roman world. It brought Paul to the fore-front among the apostles of Christ, where he ever after remained until his death. In short, this year transferred the center of influence from Jerusalem to Antioch, and transferred the sphere of apostolic labors from Judea to the Roman empire. It made the religion of Christ one of the great world religions, by freeing it from the shackles of provincialism and sectarianism. All of this was not fully accomplished in this year, to be sure, but all of it was made possible, and much of it was actually done.

**Barnabas and Saul at Jerusalem.**—The famine predicted by Agabus is described in vague terms. The word mistranslated "over all the world," is commonly used by the Greek and Roman writers to describe the Roman Empire. It was, however, often used in a still more restricted sense, as by Josephus to describe Palestine only. This Jewish historian speaks of a famine which prevailed in Judea during the reign of Claudius, and carried off many of the inhabitants. This would fit into the chronology of the Acts quite accurately. According to the statements of Josephus, this famine began about the close of A. D. 44, and was felt with more or less severity for several years. The disciples at Antioch resolved to send relief to the brethren in Judea. We see in verse 29, the first mention of the principle of Christian giving. There is no mention of a tithe or other fixed proportion in the New Testament; the

rule is "according to ability" or "as any one was prospered" (1 Cor. 16 : 2). When they had raised this sum for the relief of the Judean brethren, what was more natural than that they should send it by the hands of Barnabas and Saul? This order of the names suggests also, that until now, and perhaps for some little time later, Barnabas was looked upon as the more prominent man of the two. But ability tells in the service of Christ as elsewhere, and hence speedily Saul or Paul is found in the position of leadership.

**Renewed Persecution at Jerusalem.**—Herod Agrippa I., grandson of Herod the Great, began about this time a persecution of the Christians, and one of its first victims was James, one of the sons of Zebedee, and the brother of John, sometimes called James the Elder, to distinguish him from James the Younger, the brother of our Lord. Thus was fulfilled to him the word of Jesus, "My cup indeed ye shall drink" (Matt. 20 : 20-28). Paley finds in this passage one of the undesigned proofs of Luke's accuracy as a historian : "There was no portion of time for thirty years before, or ever afterward, in which there was a king at Jerusalem. . . except the last three years of Herod's life, within which period the transaction here recorded took place." Another incident of this persecution recorded by Luke is the arrest and miraculous release of Peter. This persecution was among the last acts of the wicked Herod's life. We are told that his death was due to the stroke of God's wrath, because he impiously permitted the people to pay him divine honors. We learn from Josephus that Herod died in great agony after a brief illness ; and, so far, the secular historian confirms the sacred narrative.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see Taylor's "Paul the Missionary," chap. 4; Stalker's "Life of Paul," chap. 5; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 16; Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 9; Neander's "Planting and Training," book III., chap. 2. On the character of Barnabas, see Howson's "Companions of St. Paul." On Antioch during this age, see Wallace's "Ben Hur," book 4, chap. 1, 2, 5, 12; book 5, chap. 12.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. What scriptural evidence is there that the name Christians was not chosen by the followers of Christ for themselves in the first instance? 2. What light does ver. 30 throw on the question of the organization of the apostolic churches? 3. Was the treatment of Peter's guard exceptionally severe? 4. What do we know of Peter's subsequent history.

# XII.

## THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARIES.

**The Return to Antioch.**—After performing their mission as messengers from the saints at Antioch for the relief of those at Jerusalem, Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch, probably about the beginning of A. D. 45. That their stay in Jerusalem was brief may be inferred, not only from what is said of it in the Acts, but from Paul's silence regarding it in Gal. 2 : 1. It is true that in the latter passage Paul is not giving an exhaustive autobiography ; but if the visit had been prolonged he could hardly have failed to mention it, since in that case he must have become more widely known among the Judean Christians. Here they resumed the work that had been so blessed during the previous year, apparently with no thought of seeking any other field of labor. But the hour had struck for a farther advance, in obedience to the Lord's great commission ; the words "Go ye into all the world" were to be more literally obeyed.

**Ordained and Sent Forth.**—The church at Antioch apparently possessed a plurality of elders—since this title would properly have been applied to the "prophets" and "teachers" mentioned, five in number. A plural eldership was certainly common, perhaps usual, in the New Testament period, though not universal ; it seems to have been general in Asia, less frequent in Europe. There is some uncertainty as to the origin and significance of this plural

eldership. Of the many explanations proposed this seems the more probable: In the great cities the church would often become too large to meet regularly as one body, and would be divided for convenience into several congregations, meeting separately, and each having its elder or teacher. But these congregations were not recognized, during the New Testament period at least, as separate churches; they were parts of one church. We read often of the church at Jerusalem, the church at Ephesus, the church at Antioch, but never of the churches of Jerusalem, or Ephesus. Have we not departed from the New Testament model in organizing separate churches within the limits of town or city, and by so doing lost power and made possible a great deal of friction and antagonism?

As these prophets and teachers engaged in their ministry —the whole church perhaps participating with them in prayer and fasting, awaiting the will of God—the Holy Ghost commanded them to set apart for a special work of evangelization Barnabas and Saul. In form this command is addressed to the church, or to the associates of these two; but they no doubt had a similar call of the Spirit to engage in this work. How the Spirit spoke we are not definitely told; in the absence of any statement, it is perhaps safe to infer that he spoke then, as he does now, by imparting to all, without consultation with each other, a simultaneous conviction that it was the duty of these men to engage in this work. This setting apart of the first foreign missionaries was what we now describe as an "ordination" and was formally accomplished by prayer and the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands was evidently a repre-

sentative act, not the act of the whole church, and it is reasonable to suppose (particularly in view of 1 Tim. 4 : 14) that the "presbytery," the associate teachers and prophets, were appointed for this service.

Paul received this ordination no less than Barnabas. As the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul needed no ordination to his work, no credentials from council or presbytery. In all his epistles he disclaims human ordination and human approval of his gospel, asserting that he had received his gospel and authority to proclaim it from Christ direct. Yet now he is going forth as the official representative of the church at Antioch in particular, and in a sense, of all Christians, to carry this gospel into the farthest parts of the Roman empire; and he does not disdain or refuse the formal sanction of his character and work that this solemn setting apart implies. Whether Barnabas had had any previous ordination, or had hitherto preached in obedience to a Divine call alone, we are not told, and one person's guess is as good as another's. We are free to speculate and infer as much as we please about these and like matters, and to formulate for ourselves as complete and consistent a scheme of New Testament church polity as we like, *provided we do not teach our speculations and theories as facts, and seek to impose them on others as tests of orthodoxy and fellowship.* A good many Baptists are in great danger of forgetting that their guesses have not the authority of Scripture. Let us not be wise above that which is written.

**The Work Begun.**—Making their way from Antioch to Seleucia they took ship for the island of Cyprus—a distance made in a few hours with a fair wind. Their first work done

here was among their own countrymen, in the synagogues of Salamis. We learn from ancient historians that the Jews were very numerous in Cyprus in the following century, and such was doubtless the case at this time, since they had synagogues (note the plural) in Salamis. The effect of this preaching is not described ; very likely it was not great. At Salamis, we are told, they had John Mark (first mentioned in the closing verse of chap. 12) as an assistant. The immediate context might imply that he assisted in preaching the word of God, but the fact that he was not set apart for this work with Barnabas and Saul would seem to be decisive against this inference. It is more likely that he assisted them by so relieving them of other cares that they were free to give all their time and strength to preaching the gospel.

The work at Paphos, on the other side of the island, was marked by at least one striking conversion. A Jewish sorcerer had imposed upon the Roman proconsul, who, though he was "a man of understanding," was not wholly free from the superstition of his age and race, and was in danger it would seem of being led astray by these pretensions. His discernment was shown, however, in his prompt recognition of the truth as proclaimed by the apostles, particularly when to this was added the miraculous infliction of blindness on the sorcerer as a punishment for his contumacy. Straightway Sergius Paulus believed, and though it is not so said, we may infer that others followed his example. The effect of the conversion of a man so influential must have been great, and this was by no means a single instance of the kind ; and yet it remained true throughout the apostolic age,

as it has since been the experience of the church, that "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called" (1 Cor. 1 : 26–31).

It is at this point in the history that Luke notes Saul's change of name and begins uniformly to call him Paul. The inference is not fair, however, that the change of name was made at this time; and yet more fanciful must be pronounced the theory that the new name was assumed out of compliment to his distinguished convert, Sergius Paulus. The use of two names in ancient times was quite common, and as the apostle's father was a Roman citizen he may have borne a Roman name, similar in form to his Jewish name, from his birth. We have a similar instance of the double name in the case of Silas, whose Roman name was Sylvanus. (Compare 1 Thess. 1 : 1 with Acts 18 : 5 seq.) Many ingenious theories concerning this double name have been propounded by theologians and critics, ancient and modern, all of whose ingenuity, however, has cast no ray of real light on the subject. All that we know is that Saul was also called Paul.

## LITERATURE.

On the work in Cyprus, see Taylor, chap. 5; Conybeare and Howson, chap. 5. On the subject of ordination, as generally understood by Baptists, see Hiscox's "New Baptist Church Directory."

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. What distinction, if any, between "prophets" and "teachers" in 13 : 1? 2. Does the mention of fasting, in connection with the ordination of Barnabas and Saul, imply that it is the duty of Christians now to fast? 3. Ancient astrology, soothsaying, and magic.

## XIII.

### THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR.

**Antioch in Pisidia.**—From the time of the apostles' labors in Cyprus, we read no longer of "Barnabas and Saul" (except in one instance, Acts 15 : 16), but of "Paul and his company," or of "Paul and Barnabas." This change in the order of the names is significant; Barnabas, as probably the elder, and certainly the elder in Christian experience, and the better known man among the disciples, had hitherto taken the precedence. Now, Paul, by reason of his superior gifts, his zeal, his capacity for leadership, began to take the first place. There was no strife for the pre-eminence between these brethren, and nothing in the history of Barnabas becomes him better than the modest cheerfulness with which he, who had been accustomed to lead, accepted the place rather of a follower.

On leaving Cyprus, a great disappointment befell Paul and Barnabas—"John departing from them returned to Jerusalem." Luke is very reticent regarding the causes of this departure, but from Acts 15 : 38 it is evident that Paul deeply resented the act, not for personal reasons, but for the work's sake. Whether John Mark left the apostles, just when he might have been of greatest service to them, because he feared persecution or because he had personal affairs at Jerusalem to look after, at any rate Paul concluded, whether justly or unjustly, that he was not one who had

counted all things but loss for Christ's sake, and held not even his own life dear if he might save men.

Arrived at Antioch in Pisidia—a town in the central table-land of Asia Minor—Paul and Barnabas sought the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. It was the courteous custom in the synagogues to ask strangers to speak after the reading of the law (for a parallel case in our Lord's life, see Luke 4 : 16–30). Perhaps some hint had reached Antioch that these Jews from Jerusalem preached a strange doctrine, and they may have been curious to hear what it was.

Paul's discourse—for he was the preacher, not Barnabas—was an argument from the Old Testament for the Messiahship of Jesus, the proof of which, the apostle urged, was definitely completed by the fact that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Through this Saviour he preached unto them forgiveness of sins. The sermon did more to arouse interest than to produce conviction, and the apostles were besought to preach again the following Sunday (the best texts omit the word "Gentiles" in verse 42). That the apostles were not idle during the intervening week we may confidently assume. Their private labors among the people so deepened the interest that the town was greatly stirred, and "almost the whole city" came on the succeeding Sabbath to the synagogue. This aroused the race prejudice of the Jews. If this gospel was for all men, if it was to obliterate the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, they would have none of it. They interrupted Paul, and disputed his argument from Scripture, until the apostle, seeing that there was no hope of convincing them, said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The result was the conversion of a large number of

the Gentiles, and the founding of a Christian church in Antioch. But many wives of influential men in the city were Jewish proselytes, and through these the Jews managed to stir up such a persecution against Paul and Barnabas that they left the city. This is almost the only case on record in which the apostles experienced opposition from the proselytes; among this class the gospel was generally received with gladness, or at any rate with respect.

**At Iconium.**—"When they persecute you in one city flee to another," said our Lord, in sending out his disciples to proclaim the truth. The apostles went to Iconium, about sixty miles southeast of Antioch, leaving behind them disciples full of joy and of the Holy Spirit. Their experience at Antioch was almost exactly repeated—Jewish jealousy refusing the gospel and stirring up the Gentiles (proselytes) against them. Here we have the only note of time that occurs in the account of this missionary journey; the apostles abode here "a long time." Everything is relative, and as it seems impossible to assign more than two years for this entire tour, a stay of a few months at Iconium might be spoken of as a long time, compared with the brief stays elsewhere. An attempt was made here to stone the apostles, but they became aware of it and escaped.

**At Lystra.**—Almost immediately after the apostles arrived at Lystra (the site of which is not definitely known), the city was greatly stirred by the working of a notable miracle; a man lame from birth was healed at the word of Paul. There was no thought, if there had been any possibility, of questioning the reality of the miracle, and the multitude rightly inferred that nothing less than Divine power could

have caused this man to walk. In their ignorance and superstitution they erred in also inferring that the apostles must be gods come down to them in the likeness of men. Paul and Barnabas appear to have been ignorant of this, for there is no evidence that they understood the dialect of Lycaonia ; it was not until afterward that the significance of the people's acclamations dawned upon them. Meanwhile, the people, having fully persuaded themselves that Barnabas was Jupiter (Zeus) and Paul, Mercury (Hermes), prepared to offer sacrifice and pay them divine honors. The apostles were with difficulty able to persuade them to forego their purpose and to listen to the gospel. It is difficult to believe that their purpose could so quickly have been turned, and that the crowds who would have worshiped were shortly after ready to stone the apostles. How long a time intervened between verses 18 and 19, we cannot tell ; probably some days at least, very likely some weeks or even months, but at the best the transition of feeling was both speedy and violent. Even allowing for the enmity of the Jews from Iconium, it is a remarkable picture of a people's fickleness.

When we compare verses 6 and 19 with 2 Cor. 11 : 25, we see a fine specimen of undesigned coincidence. Had the narrative of the Acts been a late compilation, as some critics have maintained, it would have been almost impossible to secure the exact accuracy that is so generally observed when we compare the Acts with parallel passages in the Epistles. It would have been so easy, for instance, in a narrative carelessly compiled from documents more or less unhistorical, to represent Paul as stoned several times. Such errors would

not only have been easy, but they could not have been avoided by a late composer or compiler.

The persecutions on this tour were evidently among the most severe that Paul ever endured. Twenty years later, in writing to his beloved son in the faith, he speaks feelingly of what things befell him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra (2 Tim. 3 : 11). It should seem, from Acts 16 : 1 as compared with 1 Tim. 1 : 2, and other similar passages, that Timothy was converted through Paul's preaching during this visit; if this is a correct inference, the apostle had at least one great consolation when, in after years, he thought of his sufferings at Lystra.

**The Return to Antioch.**—The sojourn at Derbe seems to have been brief, and the apostles then retraced their steps to Antioch in Syria, whence they had started. Some months were doubtless occupied in this return, the chief feature of which was the strengthening of the churches and the perfection of their organization. This is the first time that we read explicitly of the appointment of elders, or bishops, in the churches, though the office had doubtless existed for some years in the older churches. Much difference of opinion has been expressed regarding the word translated in the King James version "ordained," and in the Revised version, "appointed," and regarding the respective shares of the apostles and the churches in this ordination or appointment. Doubtless analogies may be found in the Baptist foreign mission fields of to-day. The apostles would wield by their office, experience, and character an influence in the churches hardly second to any prelatical power; the difference between the two would lie in the manner and spirit of their re-

spective exercise. The information given us about these appointments is scanty, and guessing is not very profitable or conclusive. We are safest, perhaps, in interpreting this case in the light of other Scripture and the general tenor of New Testament teaching, and concluding therefrom that as much initiative and liberty of choice was encouraged in each case as the church was in a condition to use wisely. This is certainly better than to conclude, upon this very imperfect evidence, that the apostles exercised an authority that utterly precluded the free choice of pastors by the churches. But even if we admit that the apostles had the exclusive appointing power and exercised it, their office and work were exceptional. We do not find in the New Testament that they handed down this authority to any successors. Their authority was personal, due to their character and to their special Divine call, and it died with them. Gifts of prophecy and inspiration are not transmitted by human choice and ecclesiastical ceremonies.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see Taylor, chap. 6; Conybeare and Howson, chap. 6; Stalker, pp. 77–85; Thatcher's "Apostolic Church," chap. 5; Farrar's "St. Paul," chap. 19. Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 12, contains much that is valuable in connection with this and the preceding lesson.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. The geography of the tour. Read Hackett and consult a good atlas. 2. Condense, in your own words, the argument of Paul's sermon. 3. What Greek stories of Zeus and Hermes would suggest to the people at Lystra their error?

## XIV.

### THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM.

**Its Cause and Time.**—The greatest battle in the history of the apostolic church was now to be fought, and it was plain to be seen that on its issue would depend the character of the church for all time probably, for that generation certainly. From the beginning there had been among the Jewish Christians men who could see nothing beyond the narrow horizon of Judaism. They had attempted the impossible task of putting the new wine into old wine skins—of attempting to put Christianity, like a new patch, on the old garment of Judaistic ceremonial law. They sought to make their consciences not merely the rule of their own lives (which was right), but the rule of all Christian lives (which was wrong). Still in bondage to the law, they were unwilling that others should enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. They were not willing at first that the gospel should be preached to Gentiles at all; but when God's providence had clearly indicated that the Gentiles were to have the gospel, they fell back on the demand that every Gentile convert should become a Jew and be a debtor to the whole Mosaic law. On the other hand were men like Paul, large-minded enough to see that in Christ the whole law had been fulfilled; that a religion of types and ceremonies was now an anachronism, and must soon die out among those who accepted Jesus as the Messiah; and that

to bind Gentile converts with the obligations of this moribund law was to lay on them a burden too grievous to be borne, and would nullify the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles.

These views had been growing more and more irreconcilable for a series of years, and the "irrepressible conflict" came to a crisis during the residence of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, after the first missionary tour. A party of Judaizers came to the church there and began actively propagating their views. They represented obedience to the Mosaic law as necessary to salvation—a gross and palpable perversion of the teaching of Christ, and of the gospel hitherto preached by all the apostles, who had set forth faith in Jesus Christ as the sole condition of salvation. Paul saw that this substitution of works for faith as the way of salvation, if it prevailed in the church, would utterly subvert it and transform its character. His pre-vision was justified by the later history of the church, when this doctrine succeeded in obtaining lodgment. Paul and Barnabas therefore withstood these Judaizers. But they apparently alleged that they had behind them the moral support of the church at Jerusalem and of the apostles, and this gave them a hold on some. Accordingly it was resolved to send Paul and Barnabas as delegates from the church at Antioch to the church at Jerusalem to consult about this question. This action does not necessarily imply that the church at Antioch was in any sense under the authority of the church at Jerusalem or of the apostles; only that it respected their experience, their presumably superior knowledge of Christ's teachings, and wished to be guided by their counsel in this important mat-

ter. Such was the moral influence of the apostles and the Jerusalem church at this time that their decision seemed likely to end the controversy, and furnish all the churches of Christ a rule of action that they would hasten to follow.

**Nature of the Meeting.**—This is usually called the "council" of Jerusalem, but the propriety of that term is often disputed. It seems to have conformed pretty closely to what Baptists call a "council," and very little to what in later church history was called a "council." In general church history, the word is used to describe an assemblage of delegates, in theory representing the whole church, whose decisions have the force of law throughout the church. In this meeting, so far as appears on the face of the account, but two churches were represented; it is evident that the church at Jerusalem did not, as a whole, take part in it (Acts 15 : 6); but whether their representatives were elected, or the elders and apostles acted as such by virtue of their official position, is not clear. Councils are a very common thing among Baptists, though this is the only recorded instance of one during apostolic times. It seems quite evident from such accounts as we have that the New Testament churches called pastors and set them apart to the ministry without the intervention of a council. In requesting the advice of sister churches frequently, Baptist churches simply apply to the circumstances of our own day a New Testament principle. Even were it not recognized in the New Testament at all, a council has a self-evident basis in the law of Christian brotherhood; every believer owes it to his brother to assist him with advice when requested, and every church owes the same duty to its sister churches. The custom is general at

the present day to invite a considerable number of churches to send delegates to a council; whereas in this New Testament case the advice of only one church was asked. But when a Baptist church calls a council, it is a matter of expediency not of principle, how many churches it shall invite —whether one or fifty is no matter, save as giving weight to the conclusions reached. In this case, the advice of the Jerusalem saints would outweigh that of all the Judean churches combined. In essence, therefore, this appears like a modern Baptist "council."

**The Council and its Conclusion.**—The debate was warm, as verse 7 testifies, and able, as the reported speeches of Peter and James show. The part of Paul and Barnabas was the modest one of telling facts, in which they wisely followed the example of Peter in the case of Cornelius. No eloquence could have been half so convincing. The speech of James ended the matter. What he proposed was, in effect, a compromise. He had not yet risen to the height from which Paul obtained such a sweep of vision, but what he saw he saw clearly. He could not sustain the Judaizers in their full contention, yet he was not quite ready to admit that the believer in Christ was freed from the law. He proposed, therefore, that the obligations of the "proselytes of the gate" should be required of the Gentile believers; and his opinion prevailed and became the decision of the council.

Notwithstanding the apparent tone of authority in which that decision speaks, we are warranted in believing that it was not set forth as anything more than advice. In the account of the council, and in its official decision, we merely read that "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,"

and the document itself is called an "epistle" (ver. 30). It is not until some time later that a term is applied which might in itself warrant a different view of the decision. In Acts 16 : 4, the "epistle" from Jerusalem is called *dogmata*, which the Authorized and Revised versions alike translate by the word "decrees." It is true that this was the Greek word used to translate the Latin *decreta*, which described the "decrees" of Cæsar (Acts 17 : 7), but this would not be the meaning naturally suggested to a Jew. It would rather suggest to him the precepts, doctrines of his own law, and the word is used by Paul in this sense (Eph. 2 : 15 ; Col. 2 : 14, in both instances the Revised version translating it "ordinances.")

Whether advice or decree, the finding of the council of Jerusalem seems to have been little respected among the churches. In Antioch it may have been observed for a time, but the Judaizers repeatedly refused to abide by its terms. Beyond the allusions of Paul in Gal. 2 : 2–10 and of James in Acts 21 : 25, both by way of historical reminiscence rather than of appeal to a recognized obligation, there is no trace of the decision in the history of the apostolic churches. No evidence is found in the accounts of the subsequent labors of Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles that they enjoined the keeping of these laws on the converts. Fornication they would of course forbid, but of things strangled and offered to idols they apparently said little. Paul's teaching on the latter point, if we may judge by 1 Cor. 8, diverged much from the "decree" of the council, showing pretty clearly what he thought of its binding force. In that epistle the eating of meat offered to idols is treated as no sin in itself,

not even as the transgression of any rule that was accepted among the churches, but as a thing whereby a weak brother, who did not realize that "an idol is nothing in the world," might be led back into the sin of idolatry. Therefore, the apostle does not say, "Abstain from meats offered to idols because the council of Jerusalem so ordered"; but, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

What the council actually accomplished was a demonstration to the Christian churches at large that there was no conflict of authority and doctrine between Paul and Barnabas on the one hand, and the rest of the apostles on the other. This was shown, not only by the council's decision, but by the occurrence at its conclusion: "And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me [Paul], James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; only that we should remember the poor, which very thing I was also zealous to do" (Gal. 2 : 9, 10). Paul's letters to the churches show how faithfully he fulfilled his pledge (1 Cor. 16 : 3; 2 Cor. 8 : 9; Rom. 15 : 2; compare Acts 24 : 17.)

This was the Waterloo of the Judaizing party, and the winning of this battle made possible the subsequent history of the apostolic church. The struggle continued for some years longer, and at least once waxed fierce again in Antioch, as we shall later have occasion to note; but these were only the expiring struggles of error. The church was now prepared for a larger advance in missionary effort, and the providence of God quickly led Paul into this open door.

## LITERATURE.

On the council in general, see Taylor, chap. 7; Conybeare and Howson, chap. 7; Farrar, chap. 22. On the struggle between Paul and the Judaizers, see Thatcher's "Apostolic Church," chap. 6; Weiss, "Biblical Theology of the New Testament, vol. I., pp. 197–203. Compare also Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 13.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Make a paraphrase of Peter's speech. 2. Do the same with that of James, condensing both, so as to give the line of thought only. 3. Read the epistle to the Galatians carefully, in the Revised or Bible Union version.

# PART III

# THE GOSPEL IN EUROPE

"And unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

A. D. 51–63.

# XV.

## THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR—FIRST PART.

**The Return to Antioch.**—One immediate effect the decision of the council at Jerusalem had—it stopped the mouths of the Judaizers who had been disturbing the believers at Antioch. The church had peace, being comforted and confirmed by the exhortations of Judas and Silas, and by the continued labors of Paul and Barnabas. This continuance could not have been very long, if we may interpret in the ordinary way Luke's phrase, "after some days." The impulse toward a second missionary tour came from Paul, now the recognized leader in the work among the Gentile churches; but at the very beginning a sharp contention arose between him and Barnabas over the question of again taking with them John Mark, who had abandoned the apostles and the work in Pamphylia. From the little that we know of the circumstances, Paul seems to have been justified in his judgment, and Barnabas seems to have been unduly swayed by natural affection toward his kinsman; but the quarrel is another matter. If Christian brethren cannot agree in judgment, it is their duty to avoid sharp contentions, and to differ in a spirit of love. It may be that Barnabas was becoming jealous of the growing authority of Paul; not every man, even though he is a sincere Christian, has the grace to say, as John the Baptist said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Few of us make our lives conform to the

apostolic precept, "in honor preferring one another." If jealousy influenced Barnabas, he received his due reward, for henceforth he drops completely out of the history.

**The Man of Macedonia.**—Paul chose Silas as his companion and departed, and at Lystra he added Timothy to his company. His plan seems to have embraced no larger project than the visiting and strengthening of the churches established on his first missionary journey. As they visited the churches they "delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem." This "decree" or "finding" of the council was the Magna Charta of the Gentile churches, and would be cherished by them as an unanswerable defense in case of further trouble by the Judaizers. While Paul and Silas were permitted thus to visit and encourage the churches, they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to remain and speak the word. To this statement, however, which might seem fully warranted by the text, one exception should probably be made. To this time, seemingly, must be assigned the preaching of the gospel to the Galatians, of which we only know what can be gathered from the scattered hints in Paul's epistle written later to them. Luke may have omitted reference to this tour because of his lack of personal knowledge of its incidents. When Paul and his companions essayed to pass into Bithynia, the Spirit would not suffer them, so they came down to Troas, no doubt by this time quite perplexed as to their duty, and anxious to know whither the Spirit would have them go. God's plan was revealed to Paul in the night (whether he was asleep is not stated), in a vision of a man of Macedonia saying to him, "Come over

into Macedonia and help us." Here we find the first evidence that Luke had joined the party, for he no longer writes "they," but "we." It seems impossible to draw any other conclusion than the one indicated from this significant language.

**At Philippi.**—Thus the second great period in the history of the apostolic church opened with the first proclamation of the gospel of Christ in Europe. Taking ship at Troas, Paul and his companions went *via* Neapolis to Philippi, a Roman colony, and the chief city of Eastern Macedonia. Here there seem to have been no synagogues, but a place of prayer without the gate, by the river-side—an enclosed space in the open air, such as is often found consecrated to such use among Oriental people. Hither certain proselytes, mostly women, were accustomed to resort on the Sabbath, and to them Paul preached the gospel. One of these hearers, Lydia, a seller of purple and a native of Thyatira, was converted, and she and her household were baptized. This, the first case of household baptism mentioned, is often adduced as at least probable proof of infant baptism, it being argued that there must have been young children in such a household. The best reply to this argument will be a few comments on this passage by eminent Pedobaptist scholars :

De Wette : "There is nothing here which shows that any except adults were baptized." Meyer : "When Jewish or heathen families became Christians, the children in them could have been baptized only in cases in which they were so far developed that they could profess their faith in Christ, and did actually profess it; for this was the universal, absolutely necessary, requisition for the reception of

baptism. On the contrary, if the children were still unable to believe, they did not partake of the rite, since they were wanting in what the act pre-supposed. The baptism of children, of which no trace is found in the New Testament, is not to be considered as an apostolic institution, but arose gradually in the post-apostolic age, after early and long-continued resistance, in connection with certain views of doctrine, and did not become general in the church till after the time of Augustine. The defense of infant baptism transcends the domain of exegesis, and must be given up to that of dogmatics." Olshausen: "It is improbable in the highest degree that by *her household*, children of an immature age are to be understood; those baptized with her were relatives, servants, grown-up children. We have not, in fact, a single sure proof-test for the baptism of children in the apostolic age, and the necessity of it cannot be derived from the idea of baptism."

After her conversion, Lydia constrained the apostle and his friends to abide at her house—an invitation that Paul was apparently unwilling to accept, lest the disinterestedness of his labors should be questioned. The church at Philippi ever had a warm place in his affections, and from this church he seems in later years to have accepted pecuniary aid (compare 2 Thess. 2 : 5, 7, 9 with Phil. 4 : 16; 2 Cor. 11 : 9; Phil. 4 : 10). His stay in this fruitful field was cut short by the masters of a slave girl, supposed to have a gift of prophecy from Apollo, and therefore the source of much profit to her owners. She was in fact a demoniac, and Paul, in the name of Christ, cast the demon out of her. Paul and Silas were, therefore, dragged before the prætors, and were accused of illegally making proselytes. The mob demanded their punishment and the magistrates gave sentence accordingly. The conviction was illegal, since there was no formal trial, and the punishment was illegal, for to

scourge Roman citizens was an offense of exceeding gravity. How Silas obtained Roman citizenship we do not know, but Paul's words leave no doubt as to his possessing it (verse 37). Confinement in the stocks, being a species of torture, was equally unlawful.

This imprisonment showed how God makes the wrath of man praise him. An earthquake shook the prison, while Paul and Silas prayed and praised God in the night-watches, and all the prisoners were loosed of their bonds. The jailer, knowing that his life was forfeited if his prisoners escaped, and supposing that to be the fact, would have taken his own life. Being restrained by Paul, and deeply impressed by this miracle, he brought Paul and Silas out and gave them every possible attention and token of respect. The gospel was preached to him and to all that were in his house, and the same hour he and all his believed and were baptized. In this second case of household baptism, it should be noted that all who were baptized were old enough to have the gospel preached to them, and that infants are excluded by the explicit statements of the narrative.

In the morning, when the magistrates would have discharged them, Paul and Silas insisted on their rights as Romans, and the magistrates were greatly disturbed; the infliction of the punishment had been so hasty that they probably had no time to assert their rights before. Now they were determined that the erring magistrates should make public reparation by coming in person to the prison, and leading them forth in such a way that the whole city might know they had been unjustly treated, and that no stain should rest on their reputation. This the prætors

were glad to do, to escape the consequences to themselves should their conduct, in condemning unheard and scourging two Romans, be reported to Cæsar. They were liable to death and the confiscation of all their property for what they had done, and no wonder Paul and Silas were humbly "entreated" to leave the city. This they did, after a brief sojourn at the house of Lydia, during which they comforted and exhorted the brethren.

**At Thessalonica.**—Paul and Silas departed from Philippi, but it seems reasonably certain that Luke remained. It is established in the case of Timothy by Acts 17 : 14, 15, that if he also remained at Philippi for a time he soon rejoined Paul and Silas, but we have no more indications of Luke being in their company. The abrupt change back to the third person would indicate that he was left behind to comfort and strengthen the young church of that place. The first city at which Paul and Silas made a stay of any length was Thessalonica. Here their experience was almost an exact repetition of their labors in other cities—first the apostle preached in the Jewish synagogues, winning some of the Jews, together with "a great multitude" of the proselytes; then the Jews succeeded in stirring up the mob against them, and they were brought before the magistrates on the charge of treason. This charge troubled the authorities, for it was a very delicate thing to be suspected of harboring traitors: so they took security from Jason that the peace should not be further disturbed by his friends, and that the latter should speedily depart from the city, which they did.

**At Berea.**—Going to Berea, the Jews there were found

by the apostle to be "more noble"; they gave the word a candid hearing, searching the Scriptures regarding the Messiah, and many of them believed. But the Jews of Thessalonica stirred up opposition here, and his friends conducted Paul to Athens.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject see Taylor's "Paul the Missionary," chap. 10, 11; Conybeare and Howson's "St. Paul," chap. 8, 9. For excellent notes elucidating many questions connected with the tour, see Clark's "Harmonic Arrangement of the Acts," pp. 203–219. The following will also be found helpful: Neander, "Planting and Training of the Christian Church," book III., chap. 6; Stifler's "Introduction," § 14; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 24–26; Lewin, vol. I., chap. 10.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Was there any foundation, in Paul's preaching, for the charge made at Thessalonica? 2. Why do we hear nothing of Luke and Timothy during the persecution at Philippi? 3. Make for yourselves, from the references to the subject in the epistle to the Galatians, an account of Paul's labors among them. 4. What facilities for baptism was the jail likely to contain?

# XVI.

## THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR—SECOND PART.

According to the King James version the brethren got Paul away by a ruse; having set out ostensibly for the sea, they proceeded to Athens by land, Silas and Timothy remaining in the city to give greater effect to the stratagem. The Revised Version, following a better Greek text, reads, "The brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as the sea," implying that he did actually go from Berea to Athens by water, a journey of about three days in a sailing craft, with a fair wind. The journey by land would have been two hundred and fifty miles, and would have occupied more time; and had this route been pursued, we might naturally expect the names of some of the places through which Paul passed, after Luke's usual method. His stay at Athens was brief, probably not more than a few weeks at most, while he was waiting for Silas and Timothy. During this time he was probably quite alone. It has been plausibly conjectured, from the spirited account of his stay and the report of his sermon, both of which read like the work of one who saw and heard what he recorded, that Luke had rejoined him. It seems hardly possible, however, to reconcile Luke's presence with the peculiarities of style manifest in his writing, particularly his changes from the third to the first person, and *vice versa*. The better view seems to be that Luke re-

mained in Macedonia, and was separated from Paul for a period of several years.

**Paul in Athens.**—The idolatry that prevailed at Athens made a great impression on the apostle's mind. He did not now for the first time come into contact with polytheism, but Athens was peculiarly ostentatious in its worship of every known deity. A contemporary Greek writer declares that Athens had more images of the gods than all the rest of Greece put together. Wherever the eye might range it would fall on temples, altars, and statues of the gods. The streets were thronged with the sellers of idols, and an ancient writer satirically says that it was easier to find a god than a man in the city. No wonder Luke describes it as "full of idols."

After his usual plan, Paul addressed himself first to his own countrymen and the proselytes who met in the synagogues; but it was not long ere some Athenian philosophers encountered him. How accurately, as we learn from Greek writers, Luke hits off the character of the Athenian people and their insatiable curiosity for novelties, when he tells us that "they spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Paul did not lack for listeners, therefore, even though they mocked as they heard; and at their invitation, apparently, he undertook to expound his doctrine from the steps of the Areopagus. "He stood," says Bishop Wordsworth, "on Mars' Hill, in the center of the Athenian city, with a full view of it. The temple of the Eumenides was immediately below him; and if he looked to the east, he beheld the Propylæa of the Acropolis fronting him, and the Parthenon rising above him; and on his

left the bronze Colossus of Minerva, the champion of Athens; and the temple of Victory to the right; behind him was the temple of Theseus; and a countless multitude of smaller temples and altars in the Agora and Ceramicus below him."

A nobler pulpit, a more intelligent audience, no preacher could wish; and the sermon was worthy of the occasion. It has been pronounced a model of the apologetic style of discourse. It is marked by clearness, brevity, and simplicity of style. Paul began by congratulating his hearers that they were very religious,—not "superstitious," which would have been anything but a propitiatory beginning,—so religious that, not content with erecting altars to every deity they knew by name, they had even built one "to an unknown god." This Being whom you recognize as existing, but of whose nature and perfections you have no adequate conception, I reveal unto you. It is he who made the world, a Spirit that dwells not in temples, who has made of one all men, and given them faculties by which they may know him. This is the teaching of your own poets. Therefore we ought not to degrade the worship of this God into idolatry, and although God has borne with men's ignorance, he requires them now to repent, before they come to the appointed judgment, which has been made certain by the resurrection of Christ.

Paul's words had been heard quietly if not patiently, until he came to this phrase, "raised from the dead." To his audience of Greek philosophers that appeared mere nonsense, madness almost. Neither Stoics nor Epicureans believed in the immortality of the soul, hence a resurrection was to them unthinkable. A part of his hearers broke out

into sarcastic and ironical comments; some expressed a purpose to hear more from him at a later day; a few believed. Whether a church was founded in Athens we are not told, and there is no subsequent reference in apostolic history to such a church. It seems reasonably certain, from the detailed accounts of his movements given us, that Paul never visited the city again, though he often passed through Greece. His preaching in Athens has been unfavorably contrasted, by F. W. Robertson and others, with that in Corinth, where he determined to know "only Christ and him crucified." But this is unfair; we have only the introduction to Paul's sermon at Athens, and how many preachers would be willing to have their sermons judged by the introduction? He was going on to preach Christ and him crucified, but the moment he came to Christ raised from the dead, the body of his discourse, his audience refused to listen and the sermon was never finished.

**Paul in Corinth.**—More time was spent in Corinth by the apostle than in any other cities save Antioch and Ephesus, so far as we are informed or can judge, yet less space is given to his sojourn here than to his labors in places where he spent a very brief time. Here he became acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla, and living at their house, supported himself by laboring at his trade of tent-maker, while he preached the gospel. Silas and Timothy joined him here, and assisted him in his labors. Rejected by the Jews, among whom he first preached, he turned to the Gentiles and found willing hearers and made many converts. Here we have another case of household baptism, but Crispus and all his house believed; it was, therefore, the

baptism of believers only, as in all other cases recorded in the New Testament. Here at Corinth the believers were not chiefly proselytes, as at other places, but native Corinthians, and in this fact we may find the key to the understanding of the Epistles that Paul afterward wrote to this church.

There was one sensational episode in the work of Paul at Corinth—his arraignment before the proconsul Gallio. This officer was a brother of Seneca, the Roman philosopher, and was known as the "pleasant Gallio"—he had that easy temper and complaisance that make a man a social favorite. The prosecution of Paul was illegal, and Gallio so pronounced it; and when the Greeks beat the defeated Jews before his very *bema*, Gallio "cared for none of these things." He saw that the prosecution was a case of religious spite, and his verdict probably was "served them right." That he rendered a just judgment in this case was due to his lack of moral earnestness rather than to love of justice, or he would have protected the Jews.

**The Epistle to the Thessalonians.**—It was during his stay in Corinth, as is plain from internal evidence, that the two letters to the church at Thessalonica were written. Timothy, after joining Paul at Athens, had been sent to them and brought back cheering news. At once Paul composed the first letter, probably toward the close of A. D. 52, and the second a few months later, early in 53. They are of special interest, as the earliest of all the New Testament writings. Their dominant tone is ethical; they are letters whose first intent was to warn, encourage, establish the faith, and develop the character of the church. The one

doctrine discussed at any length is that of the second coming of Christ, and this is treated mainly in its practical and ethical relations, as a source of comfort to the saints amid trouble and persecution, and as an incitement to spiritual vigilance and sobriety. The keynote of these Epistles, it has been well said, is hope. They call the church at Thessalonica, and Christ's churches everywhere, to fix their eyes upon their true hope. "For what is that hope? Is it not the hope of the revelation of her Lord in the glory that belongs to him? No hope springs so eternal in the Christian breast. It was that of the early church, as she believed that he whom she had loved while he was on earth would return to perfect the happiness of his redeemed. It ought not less to be our hope now. 'Watching for it, waiting for it, being patient unto it, groaning without it, looking for it, hasting unto it'—these are the phrases which the Scripture uses concerning the day of God. And surely it may well use them, for what, in comparison with the prospect of such a day, is every other anticipation of the future?" (Dr. Milligan.)

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 10, 11; Taylor, chap. 14; Stalker, chap. 6. On Aquila and Priscilla see Howson's "Companions of St. Paul," p. 178. See also, Farrar, "Life of Paul, chap. 27–29; Lewin, vol. I., chap. 11.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Make an analysis of the Epistles to the Thessalonians. 2. What passages in these Epistles give the clue to the time and place of their composition? 3. Does Paul teach an *immediate* coming of Christ?

# XVII.

## PAUL AT EPHESUS.

The time covered by this lesson is about three years, but for convenience the chronological order of events will not be exactly followed in this and the succeeding lesson. Paul's stay at Ephesus was broken in half by a third missionary tour (Acts 18 : 23), and it will be more convenient to consider his Ephesian work as a whole, taking the tour in connection with a later visit to Greece, narrated in chap. 20.

**The First Visit to Ephesus.**—The first visit was a brief one—an incident of the return to Antioch. Priscilla and Aquila (the order of the names is significant) accompanied Paul on his return, and remained in Ephesus, where he received so exceptional a hearing from the Jews that he promised to return to them ; but he was anxious to keep a coming feast (probably the Passover, possibly Pentecost) at Jerusalem. We are not explicitly told that he did this ; in fact, many critics omit entirely this reference to the feast at Jerusalem, in which the Revised version follows them. We are only informed that he went to Antioch by way of Cæsarea, and that after a time spent there he departed on his third tour among the churches of Galatia and Phrygia.

It was during this stay at Antioch, as appears probable from a comparison of all the texts, that the Judaizers made a last stand. The disturbance must have been a formidable one, since it led the bold Peter, who had first preached the

gospel to a Gentile, and had been the champion of the Gentile Christians twice at Jerusalem, to dissemble (Gal. 2 : 11). Barnabas also, though he had been an apostle to the Gentiles, was infected by the same cowardice, and like Peter, refused to eat with the Gentiles, "fearing them that were of the circumcision." This was a lamentable instance of defection in two men usually brave and noble-minded. The future of Christianity depended on God and one man, and they proved to be a majority. Paul withstood his fellow-apostle to the face because Peter stood condemned, in that he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. The great truth that man is justified by faith in Christ, not by the works of the law, was steadfastly and triumphantly maintained ; and never again in the history of the apostolic church was there a similar crisis. The Judaizers continued their opposition,—later we find them making trouble among the Galatian churches,—but it was shorn of its power and they fought for a dying cause.

**Apollos.**—While Paul was absent from Ephesus there occurred an episode that had great consequences in the growth of the early church. Apollos, a Jew by race and an Alexandrian by birth, was learned in the Jewish Scriptures, and eloquent. He needed only fuller light to become a Christian, but as yet knew only the baptism of John, which pre-supposed repentance and faith in a Messiah yet to come. Aquila and Priscilla "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly," and he became a believer in the Messiah who had come. Apollos was a great acquisition to the ranks of Christian teachers, for by his eloquence and knowledge of their Scriptures he mightily convinced the Jews. When

he was minded to pass over to Greece, the brethren at Ephesus wrote commending him to the love and fellowship of the disciples there. In this we find precedent, if one were needed, for a custom so obviously fit for the dismissal by letter of a member of one church to another sister church. That this was a general custom in the apostolic age, and not a single instance, may be inferred from 2 Cor. 3 : 1.

**Paul's Second Visit.**—The first incident in Paul's labors at Ephesus, on his second visit, was the rebaptism of certain disciples who had received only John's baptism. This is a matter that has greatly puzzled many students of the word, and that some difficulties are connected with the subject must be admitted; nevertheless the general principle appears plain. Christian baptism differs from the baptism of John in at least one essential thing: it pre-supposes a regenerate man, become such by faith in Jesus Christ. Unless this new birth does actually precede baptism, the ordinance becomes meaningless and void. John taught only repentance and belief that a Messiah would come; not all his converts can be reasonably supposed to be regenerate, though in the way to become so when more fully instructed in the way of the Lord. These disciples were, therefore, not so much rebaptized as now first really baptized. We are not explicitly told that Apollos received Christian baptism after his conversion; but if he did not, we may conclude that it was because the Ephesian disciples were not yet instructed by Paul in this matter. This rebaptism, and the principle on which it rests, show why Baptist churches cannot consistently receive without baptism those baptized by other denominations, unless it appears on ex-

amination that the candidate had fully accepted Christ and believed himself to be regenerate before the baptism.

This second visit of the apostle was protracted over two years and three months (compare verses 8 and 10), and is the longest stay in any one place of which we have record. His preaching, as we should infer from Luke's account, and as we learn from other sources, resulted in the establishment of a church second in numbers and influence to none of the churches of the apostolic age. To this period also we must assign the writing of two Epistles, among the most important of the New Testament writings, Galatians and 1 Corinthians. (An earlier Epistle to the church at Corinth, written by the apostle, has not survived.) These labors and successes stirred up the inevitable opposition, of which two instances are given, that of the Jewish exorcists and the riot incited by the silversmith, Demetrius. Luke's narrative of this latter incident is extremely lifelike, evidently the work of an eye-witness, and its complete accuracy has been amply confirmed by the discoveries of modern archæologists. For the results of these discoveries and the light they throw on the narrative, the student must refer to the unabriged illustrated editions of Conybeare and Howson's biography of Paul, and to that of Lewin, which, in the profusion of this illustrative matter, surpass all other books. Before this bootless uproar, which only signified the last despairing gasp of a dying heathenism, the apostle had planned to depart from Ephesus, and the riot does not appear to have either hastened or postponed his departure.

**Epistle to the Galatians.**—The circumstances under which this letter was written clearly appear in the text.

There was a commotion in the Galatian churches like that at Antioch, and the Judaizers had been only too successful. The apostle was astonished that the Galatians had "so soon," in spite of his previous warnings, been turned from the true gospel of faith to the false gospel of works. He writes, therefore, to re-inculcate the principles of the gospel, as he had himself received it, not from men, but directly from Christ. This assertion of his apostolic authority leads him to a brief review of his own history and work. Toward the close of Chapter II. he propounds the main theme of the letter, justification by faith and not by the works of the law. By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified; even Abraham was saved by his faith, which God reckoned unto him for righteousness. By the law all are condemned, but Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. What was the office of the law then? It was preparatory; under it men were in a state of tutelage—the law was our "schoolmaster" (*paidagogos*, "tutor" in R. V.) to bring us to Christ, only through faith in whom are there justification and acceptance with God. The two concluding chapters are hortatory and practical; the Galatians are encouraged to hold fast to their liberty in Christ, but not to abuse it, remembering that the real fulfillment of the law is love. "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."

**First Epistle to the Corinthians.**—The occasion, as well as the object of this letter, appears in the document itself. There was a fourfold division in the church at Corinth, parties that called themselves by the names of Paul, Apollos, Peter, and another that in an equally sectarian spirit affirmed "and I of Christ." For these divisions, Apollos and Peter

appear to have been no more responsible than Paul, who emphatically repudiates the party that affirmed him to be its leader. There was, besides, gross immorality in the church, and difficulties in regard to discipline had arisen. Apparently Paul had written to the church before (5 : 9), but the letter has not been preserved. In reply the church sent messengers (16 : 17) to the apostle, bearing a letter (7 : 1) in which they asked his advice regarding meats offered to idols and other things. The object of the letter was, therefore, to rebuke contentions and heal divisions ; to assert his apostolic authority ; to correct the immoralities in the church due to the corrupt influence of the surrounding society ; to answer the questions submitted to him ; to check the disorders in public worship that were bringing scandal on the faith ; to strengthen the faith of the weaker believers, especially in the realities of the unseen world and the future life ; and to secure their aid for the poor saints at Jerusalem. It is one of the most practical of the apostolic writings, and its injunctions are as applicable to the Christian life of the nineteenth century as they were to that of the first. It is also remarkable for containing two of the most inspiring passages in the New Testament, the noble panegyric of love in chapter 13, and the equally eloquent discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection, with its impassioned climax, chapter 15. But even here the practical element is uppermost ; for when the writer has reached the loftiest utterances of triumphant Christian faith in the New Testament, and has asserted his full assurance of final victory over sin and death, it is but to add in the next sentence : " Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work

of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see Taylor, chap. 16; Stalker, chap. 9; Conybeare and Howson, chap. 14, 15. On the epistle to the Galatians see Bishop Lightfoot's Commentary; also Meyer and Godet. On the baptism of John, in contrast with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, see Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 15. For the stay at Ephesus, see Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 21; for the first letter to the Corinthians, chap. 32; for the Epistle to the Galatians, chap. 35, 36. Comp. Lewin, vol. I., chap. 13.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Make an analysis of the Epistle to the Galatians. 2. Of 1 Corinthians. 3. How do we know there was a former epistle to the church at Corinth, and what were its contents?

# XVIII.

## THE THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR.

Under this title are grouped events separated by some interval of time, but having a common relation to the apostle's work.

**Incidents of the Tour.**—The first part of this work consisted in the visiting of the churches in Galatia and Phrygia, where the apostle preached the gospel on his second missionary tour. We learn from the fact that there were in these regions churches to visit and strengthen, how much labor is hidden beneath the bare chronicle of Acts 16 : 6 ; but beyond this we have no information regarding these two visits than what we may easily infer from the Epistle to the Galatians.

In what may be called the second part of this tour (narrated in chap. 20), which was interrupted by the long stay at Ephesus, we learn that Paul abode three months in Greece (Achaia, as distinguished from Macedonia), probably at Corinth. (See Rom. 16 : 1.) Of his return journey we read little but a catalogue of names, except in the case of the stay at Troas. This is remarkable for several things, of which the most striking, the restoring of Eutychus to life, is the least important. The real importance of this narrative consists in the fact that the disciples at Troas met on the first day of the week, and that the service was followed

by the breaking of bread, that is, the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

**The Lord's Day.**—This is the first case in which the worship of a Christian church is described in the Acts, and we find it meeting, not as we might have expected, on the Sabbath, or the seventh day of the week, but on the first day of the week, which not long after came to be known as the Lord's Day. It cannot be argued that this was an exceptional gathering, merely to meet and hear the apostle, for the phrase "when we were gathered to break bread," states a different purpose in coming together, and fairly implies a regular custom. We are not inferring too much, therefore, when we assume that the custom of Lord's Day worship was already becoming fixed in the churches, where the converts from Judaism were not numerically strong enough to control their practice. (1 Cor. 16 : 2 shows that the same thing was evidently true at Corinth.) In churches of Jewish Christians, there can be no doubt that the Sabbath was still observed, and continued to be observed for many years. Not until the second century do we find proof of the universal observance of the Lord's Day in the churches of Christ. We have indisputable evidence in such passages as Rom. 14 : 5, 6 and Col. 2 : 16 that the obligation of keeping the Sabbath was a matter of contention between the Judaizers and the Gentile Christians, and that in this, as in other like cases, Paul threw his influence on the side of liberty.

Baptists profess to take their stand in all things on the law of God. But there are two kinds of law in the New Testament, as in modern society, the statute law and common

law. There are things that we are definitely and emphatically commanded to do or not to do; but we find also a multitude of precedents and a general usage. Much of our Baptist polity rests on the common law of the New Testament, not on explicit commands. The principle is this: *the example of the apostles, where it is clear and explicit, is authoritative, because precedent is tantamount to command.* If this principle is denied, then there is no authority for the observance of the Lord's Day in place of the Sabbath; but there is also no authority for any form of church polity. And if the observance of the Sabbath is still binding on the Christian's conscience, so is the whole Mosaic law. The Sabbatarians of to-day are the legitimate spiritual descendants of the Judaizers of Paul's day. The Sabbath, as the observance of the seventh day of the week only, was a Jewish institution; the Sabbath, as a day of rest, worship, and spiritual culture, was made for all mankind, not for the Jew alone, and finds its truest observance in the Christian institution of the Lord's Day.

**The Lord's Supper.**—We find at Troas the Lord's Supper intimately associated with the worship of the first day of the week. The association is apparently habitual, and the supper seems to have been observed every Lord's Day. In the church at Jerusalem, the observance seems for a time to have been even daily (Acts 2 : 42, 46). The fact that precedent is thus far from clear and decisive, leaves to every church some liberty in this matter; but do not churches transcend their liberty when they allow months to pass without a celebration of the supper? In some Baptist churches the table of the Lord is spread every Lord's Day; in the

majority, probably, the ordinance is celebrated once a month.

At Troas, as elsewhere, baptized disciples partook of the Lord's Supper. The fact of their baptism is not stated in so many words, it is true, but it is clearly implied. The first act of discipleship was baptism, and that there should have been unbaptized disciples at Troas or anywhere else in the apostolic age is so contrary to all that is recorded as to be incredible. There is no hint, no intimation anywhere in the New Testament that other than baptized disciples partook of this supper. In some cases (as in Acts 2 : 41, 42) it is definitely stated that the baptism preceded any act of fellowship.

**Paul at Miletus.**—While here, Paul sent for the "elders" of the church at Ephesus, who are called "bishops" in verse 28, thus witnessing, as Dean Alford says, to "the fact of *elders* and *bishops* having been originally and apostolically synonymous." The apostle's parting words to these elders are not surpassed in tenderness and pathos by anything in the New Testament. He recalls the abundance of his labors in their city, the faithfulness of his preaching, reminds them of its disinterestedness, and ends by exhorting them to be constant, watchful, and self-sacrificing. This discourse is doubly memorable, as preserving to us a saying of our Lord's not recorded in the Gospels, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

**Two Pauline Epistles.**—During the period covered by this lesson were written two of the most important of the New Testament books, 2 Corinthians and Romans. That the second letter to the church at Corinth was written in

Macedonia appears from 2 Cor. 2 : 13 ; 7 : 5 ; 8 : 1 ; 9 : 2, 4 ; its date was therefore probably A. D. 58, only a few months later than the first letter. The letter to the church at Rome was written from Corinth, where it is probable that Paul spent the three months of Acts 20 : 3. Not many weeks could have separated the composition of the two letters.

The first letter to the Corinthians had not produced all the effect that the apostle had hoped. Licentiousness and strife had not wholly ceased. The Judaizers were in open revolt against his authority, and taunted Paul's friends with the apostle's failure to come, as he had promised, and set the church in order, intimating that he was very brave at a distance and in his letters. The apostle's object was to rebuke these troubles, to reassert his authority, and to renew his promise to visit them speedily. A space that would under other circumstances have been unjustifiable is, for these reasons, occupied with a vindication of his apostolic rank and authority. Though he concedes his own weakness and inadequacy, he does not fail to magnify his office as an ambassador of Christ. A large part of the letter is personal, testifying to the warmth of the writer's affections and his tender regard for this church. And he does not forget to urge once more upon the attention of the Corinthian saints the collection for their poor brethren of Jerusalem.

The letter to the Romans was not written because of any special exigency in the church of that city. The apostle had a strong desire to preach the gospel in Rome, but not yet having had the opportunity, he writes them a letter in which he sums up his teaching. This causes the letter to

partake more of the nature of a treatise on Christian doctrine than any other book in the New Testament. The writer begins with the fact and doctrine of sin ; all mankind is in a state of sin, and therefore in need of the salvation offered in the gospel of Christ. The Jew has no advantage over the Gentile, for all have sinned. Salvation cannot be by the works of the law, for by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified. Justification is through faith alone, its ground being the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, its object the reconciliation of justice and mercy, its results the glory of God and the confirmation of his law. Even Abraham was not justified by the law, but by faith. As the sequel of justification the believer has peace with God, and a certain hope of future glory. The apostle then proceeds to clear his doctrine from the imputation of leading men to sin. The believer cannot continue in a life of sin because he has become a new creature. On the other hand, so long as he continues under the law, he is under the power of sin ; the law cannot convert a sinner nor sanctify a saint. But the dispensation of grace accomplishes what the law could not do, in that it not only declares a man righteous but makes him righteous. Because the believer has been justified and has peace with God, his present sufferings seem small, while his salvation is assured. The rejection of the gospel by the Jews forms the subject of a separate section of the letter, which closes with a practical section, in which are many general and special precepts for the conduct of the Christian life. Questions of casuistry, growing out of Jewish ideas and customs, are discussed with especial care and in a way to be helpful to Christians of all ages.

## LITERATURE.

See, on the general subject, Conybeare and Howson, chap. 17; Taylor, chap. 18; Thatcher, chap. 7 (first half). On the incidents of the tour, consult Clark's "Harmonic Arrangement of the Acts," pp. 219–235; Lewin, vol. II., chap. 1, 2. On the Epistle to the Romans, see the introductions in the commentaries of Godet, Meyer, and Philippi, and chap. 37–39 of Farrar's "Life of Paul." On the Epistles to the Corinthians, see introductions in Meyer, Godet, and Beet; and on 2 Cor. especially, see Farrar, chap. 33.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Was the recovery of Eutychus to life a miracle? How can 2 Cor. 12 : 14 be reconciled with Luke's account of Paul's movements? 3. Is there any room to question the traditional account of the writing of 2 Corinthians, appended to the text in the King James version?

# XIX.

## PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

**The Journey to Jerusalem.**—Luke's itinerary is in this case more than usually minute and precise. The chief interest of the journey, however, centers in the repeated warnings addressed to Paul that he was going to Jerusalem at great peril. At Tyre there were disciples who said to him "through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem"; that is, having been informed by the Spirit that dangers awaited him there, they urged that he should not go. The words cannot mean that it had been revealed to them as the will of God that Paul should not go to Jerusalem, for he would not have disobeyed a direct command of God. At Cæsarea again, the same Agabus who had prophesied the famine in Judea (Acts 11 : 28), came to Paul and foretold that bonds and imprisonment awaited him at Jerusalem. The apostle did not question the truth of these warnings; he rather accepted them as testimonies of the Spirit, but they did not shake his purpose. Why Paul should have thought it so necessary to go to Jerusalem "to testify fully the gospel of the grace of God," we are not told. We may assume that he had a clear and unalterable conviction that it was his duty to go, and he was not a man to let danger hinder him when his duty was clear.

**Attacked by the Mob.**—On the arrival at Jerusalem of Paul and his companions, the brethren received him

gladly. The distrust that had kept them aloof on a former visit had vanished in the light of the apostle's years of labor in Christ's service. But there was still suspicion. Though the church rejoiced at Paul's account of his labors, there were those still who reported that he taught the Jews who believed that they ought no longer to keep the law of Moses. There was this foundation for the charge: Paul did oppose the law when the observance of it was set forth as the ground of justification rather than faith in Christ; and he undoubtedly taught that in Christ the law had been fulfilled, and the Christian was no longer under the law, but under grace. It would naturally follow, and it did follow, that the effect of this teaching would be gradually to do away with the observance of Mosaic rites; but Paul was willing to let this come about slowly, and he did not oppose the keeping of the law by those who felt their consciences still bound by it. He therefore willingly adopted the suggestion of James that he accompany to the temple four men who had a Nazarite vow, take part with them in the ceremonies of purification, and bear the charges for them. This would be an object lesson to the Judaizers that would deprive their charges of all weight.

This compliance on the part of Paul nearly cost him his life, and did cost him years of imprisonment and hardship—though it is possible, probable even, that even worse things might have befallen him had not this particular misfortune taken place. He had bitter enemies among his former co-religionists, who would not have suffered him to leave the city alive if they could kill him. While he was in the temple, some of these enemies, raising a mob on the false

cry that Paul had brought Gentiles into the inner court, fell upon him with the design of ending his life on the spot. Only their scrupulosity—which did not hinder them from committing murder, merely from defiling the sacred precincts—saved him. In the outer court the mob made such an uproar that the commander of the Roman cohort, stationed in the castle of Antonia, at the northwest angle of the temple area, brought a squad of soldiers and rescued Paul. During festivals, riots were of so frequent occurrence that the garrison was always ready to respond to an alarm, and this accounts for their promptitude and the saving of Paul's life. The methods of the Roman captain were as sharp and decisive as the justice of a border town, where they are said to hang a man first and try him afterward: he commanded Paul to be chained to two soldiers, and then he inquired who he was and what he had done.

**Paul at the Castle.**—The violence of the mob making it impossible to learn anything, the chiliarch commanded his prisoner to be taken to the castle. When they reached the staircase, Paul asked permission to address the mob. The Roman was surprised at being addressed in Greek, for he suspected the prisoner of being a pretended prophet, an Egyptian by birth, who had led the people astray not long before; but the Egyptian could not speak Greek, it would seem. Paul replied that he was a Jew of Tarsus, and having obtained permission to speak, beckoned for silence. The greater part of the mob, having no idea why they were there or what they were shouting about, became silent out of mere curiosity. The speech was delivered in "Hebrew," that is, Aramaic. It was simply the apostle's account of himself,

his former life and zeal as a Jew, his conversion and his appointment as an apostle of Christ. The crowd listened in quiet, but with growing impatience, until he spoke of being sent to the Gentiles—and at the utterance of that word all their hatred broke forth anew in shouts and imprecations.

The chiliarch had been unable to follow this speech and could judge of its character only by the effect it produced. That convinced him that he had in his hands some desperate criminal, and he determined to employ the usual method in such cases, the torture, to extract a confession. For the first time Paul asserted his Roman citizenship, and the centurian who had been appointed to superintend the torture, reported to the chiliarch, who thereupon did what he should have done in the first instance—he made inquiries of the prisoner. He had already committed a serious offense in having Paul bound with thongs, like a slave, preparatory to the scourging. For a moment only the chiliarch hesitated; he had himself bought his Roman citizenship for a great sum, and this poor Jew could hardly have obtained his privilege thus. But when Paul replied that he was born a Roman, he doubted no longer. In that case his citizenship must be a matter of record and easily established; moreover, to make a false claim of citizenship was a capital offense, as we learn from Suetonius. There was much degeneracy in the empire at this time; but it would not have been easy to find a Roman officer foolhardy enough to scourge a man from whose lips came the words, *Civis Romanus sum.* Paul was treated thereafter with all the respect due to a Roman under suspicion of crime.

**Paul before the Sanhedrin.**—Still in doubt as to the

nature of his prisoner's offense, the chiliarch on the following day brought him before the Sanhedrin, that he might be formally accused. That body knew as little as the Roman, apparently, what crime to charge against him—as, in fact, he had committed none but the crime of being a Christian. Without being charged with an offense, even against Jewish laws, Paul spoke to the council. Hardly had he begun when the high priest smote him upon the mouth, in flagrant contravention of the Jewish law, which forbade the using of violence to the uncondemned. The apostle's just indignation flamed forth in a scathing rebuke—for which he afterward apologized, though with biting sarcasm: "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest," that is, his actions so far belied his office that I forgot the respect due him.

Perceiving that the Sanhedrin was in no mood to judge his cause fairly or even to give him a hearing, Paul had recourse to a stratagem by which he divided his adversaries. The central feature of his preaching was, Christ crucified and raised from the dead. Therefore, he could truthfully say, as he did: "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This set the Pharisees and Sadducees by the ears at once; and so bitter was the contention between them and so cordially did they hate one another, that persecution of the prisoner at the bar was forgotten in the old strife. Nay, some Pharisees even took the part of the accused and said: "We find no evil in this man, and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?" (The words, "let us not fight against God," are not found in the best

Greek texts.) So great was the uproar that the chiliarch, fearing for the safety of his prisoner and as much in the dark as ever about his offense, had Paul rescued by the soldiers and conveyed back to the castle.

## LITERATURE.

On the general subject, see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 22; Taylor, chap. 20; Thatcher, chap. 7; second half, see also Stifler's "Introduction," section 16; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 40.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. How did Paul's father gain Roman citizenship? 2. Read what Josephus says (Antiq. 20, 76, and "Bell. Jud.." 2, 13, 5) about the Egyptian and his revolt. On the reconciliation between Josephus and Luke, see Hackett, p. 254. 3. What force are we to assign to "wash away thy sins" in 22 : 16? (See Hackett, p. 258.) 4. The history and character of this high priest, Ananias. 5. What light, if any, does 23 : 3 throw on Paul's affliction, the "thorn in the flesh"?

## XX.

### PAUL AT CÆSAREA.

**Paul before Felix.**—Defeated twice, the more bitter and unscrupulous of the apostle's enemies determined next time to succeed. About forty of them bound themselves by a horrible oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. But he had already been assured in a vision that he would be safely guarded against such dangers, that he might testify to the gospel in Rome as well as in Jerusalem. Now a providential way of escape opened. His sister's son heard of the plot and disclosed it to the chiliarch, Lysias, who sent Paul away by night under a guard of soldiers to the procurator at Cæsarea. With the prisoner a letter was sent, making no definite charge against him, and stating explicitly that he was not worthy of death or bonds. On his own showing Lysias had treated Paul unjustly and should have discharged him from custody; but the Jews were a turbulent people, continually giving their Roman rulers trouble, and Lysias preferred to let his superior officer take the risk of offending them.

Paul was kindly received by the procurator, Felix, but was detained in custody till the Jews could have opportunity to prefer formal charges against him. Five days later a hearing was given. The Jews appeared, and their case was pleaded by an orator, one Tertullus. He charged Paul with being a mover of insurrections among the Jews throughout

the world, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, and a profaner of the temple. If the first of these charges meant that Paul incited rebellion against the Roman power, no proof was offered then or afterward. The other charges formed no offense against Roman law. In his reply, Paul denied the first charge, affirming that he had caused no disorder at Jerusalem; he admitted that he was a Christian, but that was not yet regarded as a crime under the Roman law; and he challenged his accusers to prove that he had in any way profaned the temple.

Felix had been procurator of Judea more than six years, and his wife Drusilla was a Jewess. He knew too much about the matters in contention to condemn the accused, and was in fact convinced of his innocence; but willing to humor the Jews, and hoping that a bribe would be offered him by Paul or in his behalf, he detained the apostle with a promise of a further hearing. Meanwhile he summoned the prisoner to private conferences; and in one of these the apostle's preaching of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come found their way to this libertine's conscience, and he was terrified. But he did not repent and renounce his evil ways, he only said: "Go thy way for this time."

**Paul Before Festus.**—Thus two years passed and Porcius Festus was sent from Rome as successor to Felix. It was common in such cases for the retiring procurator to "clear the docket," by discharging all uncondemned prisoners; but Felix, to ingratiate himself with the Jews and prevent complaints at Rome against his administration, left Paul in prison. It is gratifying to learn that he was unsuc-

cessful ; he was accused before the emperor by a deputation of Jews, and only escaped condemnation by the influence of his brother Pallas, a favorite of Nero. Of the two procurators, Lewin speaks thus in his biography of Paul : "The new procurator had a straightforward honesty about him which forms a strong contrast to the mean rascality of his predecessor. He certainly did not do all the justice that he might have done ; but, allowing somewhat for the natural desire to ingratiate himself with the people of his government, his conduct, on the whole, was exemplary, and his firmness in resisting the unjust demands of the Jews cannot fail to elicit our admiration." He had insight enough to detect, and firmness enough to frustrate the new plot of the Jews against the life of Paul, and gave the accused apostle a speedy hearing. At this the Jews renewed their former accusations, but without proof, and Paul reiterated his assertion that he had offended against neither Roman nor Jewish law. Here Festus showed his weakness : lacking courage to offend the Jews at the very beginning of his administration by discharging Paul, he asked the latter to go to Jerusalem and there be judged—whether by Festus himself or by the Sanhedrin is not absolutely clear, though the reply would favor the latter supposition. Paul knew that returning to Jerusalem meant needless peril of his life ; and to submit himself to the judgment of the Sanhedrin was to invite death. He stood on his rights as a Roman ; it was his privilege to be tried by a Roman court, and he refused to let his accusers become his judges. As Festus had declined to acquit him, he appealed to Cæsar, and his appeal was at once allowed.

**Paul Before Agrippa.**—King Agrippa (son of him whose death is related in Acts 12 : 20–24) came to visit Festus soon after this, and being informed about Paul expressed a curiosity to hear him. Festus was very willing to accede to this request, for, as he confessed, he had no valid charge to forward to the emperor with the prisoner, and he hoped that if the apostle were examined by Agrippa, who was more familiar with Jewish law, he might have somewhat to write. Paul's speech before Agrippa was substantially the same as the one he made from the staircase of the castle of Antonia. It is the third account of his conversion given in the Acts, and varies somewhat in details from the others, but agrees with them in every essential particular. This story, and the preaching of a Messiah crucified and raised from the dead, seemed to Festus to be nothing less than madness. He had doubtless heard of this man's standing among the Jewish doctors of the law prior to his conversion, and the theory seemed to him plausible that the apostle's prolonged studies had affected his mind. But Paul, with courtesy and self-command, asserted his sanity and appealed to Agrippa for confirmation, assuming that the king must have heard of the death and resurrection of Christ, and knew them to be well-attested facts. The king's reply has been variously understood. It seems certainly to have been sarcastic. "In a little time (or with a little trouble) you will persuade me to be a Christian." The apostle's retort was both dignified and severe. "I would to God that, whether soon or late (in a little or in much time), not only you, but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am, except these chains."

When Festus and Agrippa conferred, after this speech, they agreed in pronouncing Paul innocent of any offense against Roman law. He seemed to them, no doubt, an enthusiast, a little daft on the subject of religion, but perfectly harmless and certainly guiltless of any crime. He might have been set at liberty, as Agrippa said, if he had not appealed to Cæsar; and these words are recorded to the everlasting shame of Festus, who had lacked the firmness to do what he knew justice required, even at the cost of making enemies. From the treatment afterward accorded Paul at Rome (Acts 28 : 16) we may perhaps infer that in his report forwarded, Festus expressed the opinion that the prisoner's guilt was doubtful, and recommended him to the clemency of Cæsar.

The apostle's behavior at Jerusalem and Cæsarea, as at other times in his career, has an important bearing on the duty of Christians toward the civil power. It has been denied by some Baptists in the past that a Christian man owes any allegiance to the civil power, that he should recognize a civil court, or give testimony in one under oath. Paul did not refuse to plead his case before any judicial body before which he was brought. He claimed his rights as a citizen of Rome. He warns all Christians to be subject to the higher (civil) powers, on the express ground that "the powers that be are ordained of God." That is, civil government—not any one form of it, but every form lawfully established and justly administered—is an ordinance of God. Therefore the Christian may properly avail himself of whatever rights and immunities the civil law grants him, and should cheerfully perform whatever duties the civil law im-

poses on him—always provided that they are not contrary to the higher law of God.

## LITERATURE.

See, for general treatment of the subject, Conybeare and Howson, chap. 22; Taylor, chap. 22, 23. Comp. Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 17, 18; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 41, 42; Lewin, vol. II., chap. 4.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. The downfall of Felix (see Hackett's "Introduction," sec. 6 4). 2. What was the "council" of 25 : 12, and how was it constituted? 3. The character and history of Agrippa and Bernice. 4. Compare the three accounts of Paul's conversion in the Acts, arranging them in parallel columns and noting both correspondences and divergencies. 5. How may the latter be explained, and what is their relative importance?

# XXI.

## THE VOYAGE AND SHIPWRECK.

Paul had now been in captivity at Cæsarea about two years. In the autumn of A. D. 60 or 61, Festus sent him and certain other prisoners to Rome to be tried by Cæsar. We know from Josephus that it was not uncommon thus to forward prisoners for trial at Rome, even when they were not Roman citizens and had not appealed to Cæsar. The journey was to be made by sea, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, which made the Mediterranean unsafe. Aristarchus (Acts 19 : 20 ; 20 : 4 ; Philem. 24 ; Col. 4 : 10) accompanied Paul, as did Luke, if we may again believe the style of the narrative to warrant such an inference. Aristarchus probably was a voluntary companion of the apostle, notwithstanding he is spoken of as a "fellow-prisoner" in Col. 4 : 10, which may mean no more than that he afterward voluntarily shared the apostle's imprisonment.

**From Cæsarea to Crete.** — The centurion to whose custody Paul was assigned appears to have been an officer of the imperial guard. He treated his prisoner, whom he doubtless discerned to be no ordinary man and no common criminal, with every courtesy. One case is especially mentioned. When the ship touched at Sidon, Paul was permitted to go ashore and refresh himself among his friends — accompanied, of course, by the Roman soldier to whom he was chained. Sailing to the north of Cyprus, because of

contrary winds, they came to Myra, in Lycia, and there took passage for Italy in an Alexandrian ship about to sail. Egypt was at this time one of the principal sources of Rome's corn supply, and we might have expected, even without reading it in Acts 27 : 38, that this ship would be loaded with wheat. Some of these vessels were of large size, comparable to the merchant ships of our own day. The ship in which Josephus voyaged to Rome—like Paul he was shipwrecked on the way—contained six hundred souls. The winds still continued contrary, and they were "many days" in making the distance from Myra to Cnidus, about one hundred and thirty miles—a distance that such a vessel, with a fair wind, should have made in a single day. Sailing to leeward of Crete, in a southerly direction, they coasted the south side of the island until they came to Fair Havens, two open roadsteads contiguous to each other, which fact probably explains the plural form of the name. This would afford a safe temporary anchorage and shelter from the northwest wind that had hindered them so much thus far, but it was not a fitting place to lay up the ship for the winter. The autumnal equinox was now past, as we learn from Paul's reference to "the fast" in ver. 9, and the period of safe navigation was now closed. A winter voyage was dangerous to the mariners of that day, less on account of the violence of wind and wave than because the clouds obscured the sun and stars, on which, in the lack of the compass, they depended for guidance. Paul warned the captain and centurion that the continuance of the voyage portended danger to ship, cargo, and life. It does not appear that he had any special revelation ; he spoke merely in the exercise of ordi-

nary human foresight. The centurion, however, disregarded a landsman's warning and listened to the advice of the seafaring men, which was to proceed at least to Phenice, a harbor on the island affording suitable shelter for the winter.

**The Storm and Shipwreck.**—Taking advantage of a favorable south wind they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, hugging the shore. Before they had proceeded far, "a typhonic wind" struck the vessel, called Euraquillo (*i. e.*, a nor'easter)—a common shift of the wind in those seas. Their only recourse was to run before it, which they did. When they came under the lee of the island called Clauda (now Gozzo), in comparatively still water, they were able, with much difficulty, to hoist in the boat, which in the mild breeze had been carelessly towed astern. They also undergirded the ship with ropes or chains, a common precaution in those days to help a vessel resist the force of the waves. Then fearing lest they be driven upon the sandbank known as Syrtis Major, on the coast of Africa, southwest from Crete, they lowered the sail, and (as some think) "scudded under bare poles," as a modern sailor would say. Or, more likely, only the mainsail is meant, and the ship "lay to" under one of her smaller sails. Ships of this size had two or three masts, and the proper handling of the ship under these conditions was to "lie to." This would better accord with the subsequent account than the supposition that the ship was put before the wind; she must have foundered or struck on the African coast in a day or two if that had been done. She appears to have made leeway slowly, as a ship would when lying to under a reefed foresail. The

next day they lightened the ship of the freight, and on the third day cast out all spare tackling. If we read "we cast out," in verse 19, it indicates that passengers as well as crew joined in the labor.

The storm continued for "many days," the heavens were obscured, and the navigators had no means of knowing where the ship was. All knew they were in extreme danger and were much dispirited, as well as worn out by labor and lack of food. Paul now stood forth and comforted them. He had received assurance from God that only the ship should be lost by being cast upon some island, and exhorted all on board to be of good cheer. On the fourteenth night after their departure from Fair Havens land was discovered, and the ship was anchored with four anchors cast out of the stern—not out of the bow, as is the modern practice. In the morning the sailors would have seized the boat and tried to escape, but Paul spoke to the centurion and the plot was frustrated by cutting the boats loose. The sailors were needed for the handling of the ship, as the subsequent account shows, and hence for the saving of all. By the apostle's advice all now partook of food, he again assuring them of their safety and setting the example of eating, after giving thanks to God. Again they lightened the ship, weighed anchor, and hoisting the mainsail, beached the vessel in what is now St. Paul's Bay, Malta. The soldiers would have killed the prisoners, to prevent their escape, but the centurion was more humane, and finally all reached the shore in safety.

**The Rest of the Journey.**—The shipwrecked people were received with great kindness by the people of Malta,

who treated Paul and his companions in particular with great honors, being much impressed by two miracles wrought, in the one case in his behalf, in the other by him in behalf of the governor's father. Here in Malta the party spent the winter, and when in the spring they departed, the people laded them with all things necessary for their comfort. The second voyage, in a second Alexandrian ship, was uneventful. Touching at Syracuse, they landed finally at Puteoli, near Naples, and made the rest of the journey by land. At Appii Forum some of the brethren at Rome came out to meet Paul; and touched by this manifestation of brotherly love and sympathy, he thanked God and took courage.

## LITERATURE.

On the general features of the voyage, see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 23, 24; Taylor, chap. 24, 25. For special incidents, especially its nautical features, Smith's "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul" (4th edition, London, 1880) is very helpful. Many of his conclusions are given in Hackett's notes. Consult also Clark's notes, "Harmonic Arrangement of the Acts," pp. 247–263; Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 19; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 43; Lewin, vol. II., chap. 5.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Ancient ships and methods of navigation. 2. What various explanations have been given of the standing of Julius? 3. The itinerary of the voyage and the places named—trace all on a modern map. 4. How was the undergirding of ancient ships done? (See Hackett, p. 301).

# XXII.

## THE FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT.

**A Fruitless Disputation.**—On his arrival at Rome, Paul continued to receive tokens of favor from his custodians. He was not cast into prison, but was suffered to live by himself in his own hired dwelling, yet still chained to a Roman soldier. On the third day after his arrival he called together the chief men among the Jews, to whom he narrated the circumstances of his captivity, and the cause of his being at Rome. They replied, what was doubtless true, that they had received neither written nor oral information from Jerusalem, and expressed a wish to hear further from him regarding this sect (*i. e.*, Christians) everywhere spoken against. They were careful not to commit themselves, either by admitting any knowledge of the Christians in Rome, or by saying anything againt "this sect" on their own authority. Being, as they professed, in a state of complete ignorance concerning Paul's case, and seeing him treated with special consideration, and their own state in Rome being precarious and uncertain, they temporized.

A day being appointed, the Jews came to Paul's lodging, and he expounded to them his Messianic doctrine from the Scriptures "from morning till evening." As in previous instances, some believed but more disbelieved, and they departed, but not until Paul had reminded them of Isaiah's words concerning their hardness of heart. "Be it known

therefore unto you," were his concluding words, "that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles; they will also hear." And these are the last words from the lips of Paul recorded by Luke's pen—appropriate parting words from him whose most highly prized title was that of apostle to the Gentiles.

**The Imprisonment, Trial, and Release.**—We only learn from Luke that Paul dwelt two whole years in this way, quite free to receive visits from all, and "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness." This abrupt ending of the book of Acts can hardly have been designed by the writer; he doubtless purposed a continuance of his narrative at some time, but was overruled by the providence of God. Nor is this closing sentence consistent with the theory that at the end of this two years Paul was condemned and put to death. For the remainder of his history, however, we have only a few hints here and there in his later writings, and some ancient traditions, of slight value in themselves, but significant when confirmed, as they are, by the written word.

We learn first that when he wrote his letter to the Philippians, Paul confidently expected soon to be released. "But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith" (Phil. 1 : 23–25; compare 2 : 23, 24). This is quite unmistakable in its significance, entirely different from the tone of the second

letter to Timothy, for example, where he looks forward to a speedy death. The same tone is maintained in the first letter to Timothy—if that was written at this time, as some think—who was at Ephesus, where Paul had some years earlier besought him to remain when he went into Macedonia: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God" (1 Tim. 3 : 14, 15). And again, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4 : 13). The same hope breathes in these words to Philemon, "Prepare me also a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you."

There is evidence, positive though slight, that this confident expectation was realized. All the critics are agreed that the letter to Titus cannot have been written before the Roman imprisonment. But there is not only no mark in the epistle that the writer was in bondage, but clear proof that he was at liberty. To Titus he says, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city as I gave thee charge" (Titus 1 : 5). And later on, "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, give diligence to come unto me to Nicopolis: for there I have determined to winter" (Titus 3 : 12). The first of these passages is not consistent with anything that we know of Paul's labors from the Acts, and clearly points to a subsequent visit to Crete, while the last quoted words are not appropriate in the mouth of a prisoner, who might hope or expect, but could hardly "determine" his future acts. We may conclude, therefore, that

Paul's expectation of release was realized; that he executed his cherished project of joining Timothy at Ephesus, and probably wrote his letter to Titus thence.

What we know of the state of things in Rome at this time is entirely consistent with this theory. Before the fire in July, 64, there was no serious persecution of the Christians in Nero's reign; and as Paul had come to Rome virtually acquitted by Festus, there is every reason to believe that at his formal hearing before Cæsar he was promptly declared innocent, and set free.

This conclusion is made a moral certainty by Paul's words in his second letter to Timothy: "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. 4 : 16, 17). This says, in almost so many words, that the apostle was released and spent yet other years in the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles.

To this first Roman imprisonment is assigned, by the general consent of scholars, the writing of the Epistles to Philemon, to the Colossians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, and possibly, also, the first letter to Timothy, though this last was more probably written after his release. The order in which these letters were composed is conjectural, but the one given above is confirmed by many things in the documents themselves.

**Philemon.**—The one to whom this letter was addressed was a man of substance in Colosse, converted under Paul's

labors (ver. 19); and the occasion of its writing was to commend to him, as a brother in Christ, one Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, who had wronged his master and fled to Rome to escape the consequences. Having been converted, he decided to return to his master and make atonement for his sins, but was naturally doubtful as to his reception. Paul does not interfere with the institution of slavery directly, but the doctrine of Christian brotherhood that he lays down in this Epistle was incompatible with the ownership of one man by another; and accordingly, where Christianity has prevailed slavery has vanished. Christianity means the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and when this is conceded the civil law cannot long deny equal rights to all men.

May we not, from this apostolic method, learn something regarding the duty of Christian teachers and preachers today? The silences of Scripture are significant—what is not said often means quite as much as what is said. The society of the Roman Empire was organized on a basis essentially immoral, and the State was organized on a basis essentially unjust. The imperial power denied to the people political rights that we now consider inalienable; and the Roman law denied to more than half the population the right to personal liberty. But neither Christ nor his apostles preached a political and social revolution. That is to say, they did not preach revolution in terms; they did preach revolution in fact. The doctrines of the New Testament are revolutionary in any society or in any State not organized on the basis of eternal righteousness. They are a leaven that must inevitably work out social and political regeneration by gradual and

peaceful means. Such was their effect on the Roman Empire and on Roman society. The social and political regeneration that many Christian men desire in our own day is to be sought by a similar method—not by violent proclamation of the duty of revolution, but by the faithful inculcation of the principles of the pure gospel of Christ. If there is wrong in State or society to-day, this is the divinely appointed way of righting it ; but they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.

**Colossians.**—The church at Colosse was not founded by Paul, nor even visited by him, as we may safely infer from his letter, though he knew some of its members. He may well have learned of its state from Onesimus, since the house of Philemon was one of the church's meeting places. Taking advantage of the return of Onesimus, he sends a letter warning the saints at Colosse against the dangers of certain false doctrines. These, as the allusions plainly show, were a combination of Judaic and Gnostic teachings. The Gnostic doctrine of creation is distinctly opposed in 1 : 16, 17, and the favorite doctrine of emanations is as clearly condemned in 2 : 18, 19. Against these useless speculations the writer urges the duty of heavenly mindedness in Christ, and exhorts the saints to let the proof of their spirituality be manifest in godly lives.

**Ephesians.**—It has been said that the only certain thing about this letter is that it was *not* addressed to the church at Ephesus, at least not specifically. No church is mentioned in it, and the tradition which attaches the Ephesian church's name to it is late and untrustworthy. It may well have been that letter to the church at Laodicea mentioned in Col. 4 : 16,

and it may have been given this impersonal form to adapt it to be read in other churches—in short, it has all the appearance of a circular or "catholic" epistle, designed for no one church in particular. There is a marked resemblance between this letter and that to the Colossians, but the thought is loftier and the style finer. It is a strongly doctrinal letter, and lays special stress on God's purpose in redemption and the fact that Christ is the central figure in this redemption. The debt of both Jew and Gentile, but especially of the latter, to the grace of God is emphasized, and this naturally suggests the communion of saints, the true unity of believers in Christ. The closing chapters are occupied with practical exhortations, especially with a plea for faithfulness, steadfastness. One word is especially characteristic of this epistle: it is "stand."

**Philippians.**—"Rejoice" may be regarded as characteristic of this letter, since it occurs so frequently that the most casual reader cannot fail to be struck by it. There is less of method, of orderly sequence of thought, of definite divisions, in this than in Paul's other letters. It is more purely epistolary in style, and for this reason has a special attractiveness to the reader. It contains only one doctrinal passage, but that is one of the noblest in the New Testament, and goes deeper into the person and work of Christ than any other (2 : 5–11). "Surely," says Professor Wm. Arnold Stevens, "the great apostle to the Gentiles could have closed this marvelous series of inspired letters to the churches he had founded with nothing more beautiful and appropriate than this loving and tender epistle, which expresses so ardently his perfect joy and gratitude over the remarkable

fellowship of this beloved church, exhibits so gloriously his calm and heroic spirit of resignation and triumph in view of a possible martyrdom, and accepts so delicately and graciously the material gifts of his brethren, even as a noble king might receive the offerings of devoted subjects."

## LITERATURE.

On the imprisonment, see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 25, 26; Taylor, chap. 26, 27. Comp. Stifler's "Introduction," sec. 20; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 44, 45; Lewin, vol. II., chap. 6. On the epistles named, see the introduction to each in the "American Commentary on the New Testament," in Meyer's Commentaries, and the like; and especially consult Bishop Lightfoot's Monograph; and compare Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 46–52.

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. Why was Paul's trial so long delayed? 2. Study the epistles written during this imprisonment, and let each test for himself the statements and conclusions of the foregoing text.

# PART IV
# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCHES

A. D. 63–100

# XXIII.

## PAUL'S CLOSING YEARS.

The common tradition in the post-apostolic church is thus stated by Eusebius: "After defending himself successfully, it is currently reported that the apostle again went forth to proclaim the gospel, and afterward came to Rome a second time, and was martyred under Nero." How long was the interval between the two imprisonments, and where the apostle labored, we can only conjecture with a good degree of plausibility, though in some of the details we may be morally certain that we are correct.

**The Journey to Spain.**—We know from Paul's own words, that, had he not been sent to Rome as a captive, it was a cherished purpose of his to visit the church of that place in the course of a missionary tour as far westward as Spain (Rom. 15 : 22–24). Tradition asserts that such a tour was actually made. Indeed, the testimony of Clemens, the disciple and companion of Paul, can hardly be called tradition, but should be accepted as fact; and he tells us that Paul, before his martyrdom, traveled "to the boundary of the West." Other ancient writers speak of a journey to Spain, and even to Britain, as well-known facts in the history of the apostle. The Church of England has long professed to owe its origin to the labors of Paul, and has some slight historical justification of the boast. No incidents of

this journey are preserved, even by tradition, nor is its chronological connection with the other labors of the apostle in his late years at all clear.

**His Labors in the East.**—Before or after this journey, as one chooses to place it, come a series of tours and apostolic labors nearer the scenes of Paul's three great missionary circuits recorded by Luke. The work in Crete referred to in the letter to Titus, and that journey in Macedonia mentioned in the first letter to Timothy, find their natural place here. It is difficult, not to say impossible, to fit them into the history of Paul as given in the Acts and his earlier epistles. The style of the so-called "pastoral epistles" differs considerably from Paul's other writings, and points toward a considerably later composition; and though the argument from style may be pushed to absurd lengths, it is by no means without weight. There are also visits to Troas and Miletus (2 Tim. 4 : 13, 20) that can hardly be placed anywhere in the apostle's life but here. We may confidently assign a period of not less than three years to these journeys and labors.

**The Second Imprisonment and Death.**—If the Epistle to Titus is evidently the composition of a free and hopeful man, the second letter to Timothy is as evidently the writing of a captive who sees himself about to be released by death. We have no means of knowing how Paul was brought before Nero the second time, but in A. D. 67, to be a Christian was a capital offense in itself, and the cruel Nero was bitterly persecuting the Christians in the hope of diverting attention from his own crimes. During this last captivity, which was evidently more rigorous than the first, Onesiphorus sought

out Paul very diligently and refreshed him (2 Tim. 1 : 16, 17), and toward the last he writes "only Luke is with me," and exhorts Timothy, "Do thy diligence to come before winter" (2 Tim. 4 : 11, 21). Paul is ready to be offered, and knows that the time of his departure is at hand.

Ancient tradition is more than usually explicit regarding the apostle's death, and seems very likely to be more than usually correct—placing it in the year 68, the last of Nero's hateful reign. His Roman citizenship exempted him from an ignominious death, and entitled him to be beheaded by the axe of the lictor. Many writers concur in saying that the place of execution was a little outside of the city walls, on the Ostian road, very near the spot where Constantine erected the great basilica of St. Paul. "The blow of the axe," Stalker says, "only smote off the lock of the prison and let the spirit go forth to its home and to its crown. The city, falsely called eternal, dismissed him with execration from her gates; but ten thousand times ten thousand welcomed him in the same hour at the gates of the city which is really eternal."

**The Pastoral Epistles.**—The external testimony to these epistles is complete, and they bear within themselves convincing marks of genuineness. They contain the completest instructions in the New Testament regarding the nature and proper administration of the pastor's office.

The first letter to Timothy was plainly addressed to him while he was at Ephesus filling the office of bishop according to Paul's previous directions. The tradition that Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus is, therefore, not so much tradition as history. The letter opens with a warning

against heresies—some of which are described in detail—and an exhortation to be faithful to the gospel. The second chapter is devoted to practical directions regarding the conduct of the church, especially the behaviour of men and women in the meetings. Chapter three is given to the qualifications of bishops and deacons, which are minutely set forth. The writer then returns to the heretics and their doctrines, some of which he confutes. The rest of the letter is filled with personal advice and exhortation to Timothy, his relations to other elders being one of the chief matters treated. The writer's personal affection for Timothy, as well as his official concern that the younger man may continue to be zealous and faithful, may be read in every line.

The letter to Titus was written during Paul's last missionary travels, perhaps from Ephesus. These travels had included a visit to Crete, and Titus had been left here to ordain elders in the churches. These facts, gathered from the letter itself, explain its contents. The letter is personal, direct, familiar, full of practical hints and earnest exhortation. It gives substantially the same advice regarding the qualifications of elders that was previously given to Timothy. Practical advice regarding the conduct of Christians is also given, the duty of being orderly and obedient toward their rulers being especially enforced.

The second letter to Timothy evidently proceeds from a Roman dungeon, whence the apostle expected to be taken only to be condemned and executed. It begins and ends with an earnest assurance of the apostle's desire to see speedily his son in the faith. Timothy is exhorted to the fearless exercise of his ministerial gift; to hold fast to

the doctrine he had received; to endure hardness for the gospel. Directions follow regarding his spirit and conduct as a Christian teacher, especially in dealing with teachers of heresy. Apostasy and unfaithfulness are to be expected, but Timothy is exhorted to remain faithful and carry on the work that the apostle was about to lay down. The writer concludes with special commissions and greetings and a benediction. This letter has a peculiar and pathetic interest as the last words of the Apostle Paul.

## LITERATURE.

On these closing years, see Conybeare and Howson, chap. 27; Taylor, chap. 28; Stalker, chap. 10; Lewin, Vol. II., chap. 7–10; Neander, "Planting and Training of the Christian Church," book III., chap. 10; Farrar's "Life of Paul," chap. 55. On the Pastoral Epistles see Fairbairn's treatise and the commentaries of Ellicott and Meyer; also Farrar's "Paul," chaps. 53, 54, 56. Farrar's Excursus VIII. on the "Evidences of the Liberation of Paul," is valuable. On Paul's later writings consult, in addition to authorities already named, Findlay's "Epistles of Paul the Apostle."

## HINTS FOR ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

1. When was the "first defense" referred to in 2 Tim. 4 : 16? 2. Read carefully the pastoral epistles in the Revised version and note their difference from, as well as resemblance to, Paul's other writings. 3. Make a note of all other New Testament passages like 2 Tim. 3 : 16, and deduce from them the biblical doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture.

# XXIV.

## PAUL'S COMPANIONS.

More than half of our lessons thus far have been given to the work of the Apostle Paul. In this we have only followed the example of the author of the Acts of the Apostles. No doubt Luke was most familiar with Paul's labors, but no doubt also he was directed by the Holy Spirit to give them this prominence because they had the decisive influence in the development of the Christian church and of Christian doctrine. We are not to think, however, that the labors of others were of slight importance, because fewer details about them are recorded in the New Testament, and particularly in the Acts. It will be the aim of the remaining lessons to outline the work of others than Paul, and this can be best done by grouping the facts about certain representative men, beginning with those closely associated with Paul.

**Barnabas.**—The name of Barnabas first suggests itself. Of his early life we know almost nothing. He was a native of Cyprus, a Levite (Acts 4 : 37), and his name was originally Joseph. How and when he came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah we have no hint—tradition makes him one of the Seventy. We first learn of his discipleship after Pentecost, when he showed the genuineness of his love for Christ and the brethren by selling a field that he possessed and laying the price at the apostles' feet. This sacrifice would naturally gain

for him the confidence and love of the Jerusalem church, and he soon showed himself fitted for leadership. That he was eloquent we may gather from the surname soon given him, for Barnabas signifies "son of consolation," or "exhortation." He "was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Barnabas was a man of noble heart, generous, loyal to friends and kindred. He showed this character in his reception of Paul, when all other Christians stood aloof from him. He showed it in his insistence upon the companionship of Mark. We do not know the circumstances sufficiently to apportion the blame for that "sharp contention," but if the fault were wholly his, it was evidently a fault that leaned to virtue's side. The services of Barnabas up to that time had been as great to the cause of Christ as those of Paul, and though we hear of him but once more we cannot doubt that he continued to be a preacher of Christ to the end of his life. The last mention of Barnabas indicates a weakness in his character. He gave way to the Judaizers and dissembled his real views for the sake of peace (Gal. 2 : 11). Warm-hearted and generous, he lacked decision of character in this crisis. As we have seen, for some time he was a more influential man than Paul among the churches, and of all those associated with Paul in evangelistic work his name must be ranked first. The epistle bearing his name is spurious, having been composed in the second century, according to the present consensus of scholarship.

**Mark.**—We know of Mark only that he was the son of a certain Mary of Jerusalem (Acts 12 : 12), and the cousin or nephew of Barnabas (Col. 4 : 10). His name was John,

to which the Roman surname of Marcus was later added, superseding the former. It has been plausibly conjectured that he was the "young man" of Mark 14 : 51—at that time probably already a convert. His connection with Barnabas caused him to be selected as companion and assistant on the first missionary tour. His desertion of the apostles and the results of that hasty and ill-considered act have already been fully discussed. By subsequent faithfulness he fully atoned for his error, as we may infer from Paul's references to him (Col. 4 : 70 ; Philem. 24). Later we know that he was with Peter at Babylon (1 Peter 5 : 13), and it was perhaps on his way to join Peter that he made the visit to Asia Minor referred in Col. 4 : 10. Either before or after this, he was with Timothy at Ephesus when Paul wrote the second letter to Timothy, and the apostle was anxious for his speedy return to Rome (2 Tim. 4 : 11). According to tradition Mark received from Peter the greater part of the facts he recorded in his Gospel, which is of special interest as being probably the earliest of our four Gospels, and as having furnished both Luke and Matthew with a considerable part of their materials. The direct, fresh, often picturesque style of Mark confirms the tradition that he received assistance from Peter in composing it. The date of this Gospel may be approximately fixed at A. D. 62.

**Timothy.**—Timothy was the son of a Greek and a Jewess. The father's name we do not know, and he probably died while the child was still young. The mother Eunice, and the grandmother Lois, were devout, and taught him from a child to know the Scriptures. We have already seen that the conversion of Timothy and his mother, who received

the word with "unfeigned faith" (2 Tim. 1 : 5), compensated Paul for his sufferings at Lystra. The churches of Derbe and Lystra bore witness to Timothy's character a few years later, and Paul chose him as a special helper in his missionary work. It was very likely at this time that the hands of the presbytery were laid on him, and he was ordained an elder or bishop (1 Tim. 4 : 14). On account of his semi-Israelitish birth, he also received the seal of a child of the covenant, that there might be no cause for scandal in his future labors. His work with Paul during the second missionary tour seems to have been constant and very efficient. He was frequently employed to bear messages to churches that Paul could not visit. During Paul's two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea he was probably at Ephesus, and he does not appear to have journeyed with Paul to Rome, though he joined the apostle there and comforted him during the imprisonment. After the apostle's release Timothy went again to Ephesus, and our knowledge of him then ceases, except for the reference to him in Heb. 13 : 23, from which we learn that he was at one time—probably after the death of Paul, for we cannot fit any imprisonment into the facts known about Timothy up to that time—a prisoner for the gospel's sake, but was acquitted. Of all his companions Paul seems to have cherished the greatest personal affection toward Timothy. This testifies to his amiable qualities as strongly as the frequent mentions of him testify to his piety and faithful service of his Master.

**Apollos.**—We have already learned all that is to be certainly known of Apollos. A Jew, born at Alexandria, eloquent, thoroughly versed in the Old Testament, he came

to Ephesus about A. D. 54, and there learned the truth more fully from Aquila and Priscilla. Then followed his labors in Achaia, especially at Corinth. We know from 1 Cor. 16 : 12 that he returned to Ephesus, and that he was highly esteemed by Paul ; so we cannot regard him as responsible for the folly of those in Corinth who called themselves his followers. The last mention of Apollos (Titus 3 : 13) indicates that he never lost the esteem of Paul, but of his subsequent labors we know nothing certainly.

Special interest, however, attaches to the little we hear of Apollos, because he is believed by many to be the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That epistle is anonymous, while all of Paul's Epistles definitely state their authorship. Moreover, 2 : 3 utterly excludes Paul from the list of possible authors, since the writer classes himself among those who received the gospel at second hand, while Paul always asserted a direct revelation of the truth to him by Christ (Gal. 1 : 1, 11, 12, 15, 16 ; 2 : 6 ; 1 Cor. 11 : 23). The style is so different from that of the other Pauline Epistles, that only positive evidence could convince one that Paul wrote the epistle. On the other hand, the doctrine is distinctly Pauline, but with such differences as we should expect from a disciple of strong personality. And, as we saw in treating of Timothy, the passage mentioning the latter's imprisonment, points to a time of composition after Paul's death. We may learn from the epistle itself that its author was certainly a Jew, probably an Alexandrine Jew, for the teaching shows traces of Philo's philosophy. He was a trained rhetorician, not residing in Italy at the time, and at liberty. He was an intimate friend of Timothy. He

addresses his letter to Judæo-Christians, among whom Paul did not labor during his later years, but with whom Apollos had wonderful success. All of these indications point to Apollos. On the other hand, many of them are equally consistent with the tradition that Barnabas wrote the epistle, which is found first in Tertullian's writings. If, however, those critics are right who find in 9 : 1-5 errors of detail regarding the arrangement of the temple—the writer describing rather the tabernacle and supposing the temple to be exactly similar—Barnabas would be excluded from possible authorship, for as a Levite he must have been practically familiar with these things. The deviations from absolute accuracy in no way affect the argument, if they are admitted to exist; they are of no more importance than verbal deviations in a quotation, the sense of which is preserved; but they are such as Barnabas could not be supposed to make, while they are precisely such as Apollos, who had never beheld the holy place, might reasonably be expected to make. For the details see any good commentary on this passage. The judgment of critics more and more inclines to the belief that Luther's happy guess regarding the authorship of this epistle was correct.

## LITERATURE.

Comparatively little is available. See Howson's "Companions of St. Paul," especially those named in the lesson; also articles on these names in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," the "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia," and similar books of reference.

# XXV

## JOHN, THE BELOVED.

John was, in all probability, a native of Galilee; for his home, when we first read of him, was on the shore of Gennesaret, apparently of Bethsaida (comp. Luke 5 : 9 and John 1 : 44). Of his parents we know little more than the names; the father was Zebedee, and the mother Salome. By some the mother is identified with the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19 : 25; comp. Matt. 27 : 56, and Mark 15 : 40), which would make John the cousin of our Lord. This might account in part, though only in part, for the special affection that existed between them. Zebedee was engaged in fishery, and was a man of some wealth, employing servants (Mark 1 : 19, 20). Later, the father perhaps being dead, Salome is mentioned as a woman of "substance" (Luke 8 : 3; Matt. 27 : 55), and John had a house of his own (John 19 : 27). The apostle's acquaintance with the high priest—if John was the "other disciple," as is generally admitted—also points to a degree of social importance and even of culture, not usually associated with the "poor, ignorant fishermen of Galilee," as it is common to describe the apostles of Jesus. The life of John, as known to us, naturally falls into two periods, with the death of Jesus as the dividing line.

**First Period.**—We may infer in the case of John a careful education, such as the sons of the best Jewish families

then received. This would develop in a naturally ardent soul a zealous attachment to the Jewish faith, and a belief in the coming Messiah. The proclamation of the Baptist's message found a ready acceptance in such hearts, and John, together with his brother James—conjectured to be the elder of the two, from his name being so generally given first—became disciples of the wilderness teacher. On the day following the baptism of Jesus, hearing the Baptist's testimony that this was the Lamb of God, John and Andrew followed him, and abode with him that day—I assume here, and everywhere, that the unnamed disciple is always John. John must have been among the disciples who attended their master to the marriage feast at Cana, and witnessed his first miracle. It is not difficult to understand how this manifestation of Divine power, joined to their previous impressions gained from association with Jesus, confirmed their faith in him and his mission. After a journey with their master to Jerusalem, to attend the Passover, and the return through Samaria, the disciples seem for a short time to have returned to their homes and former vocations. The circumstances of the final call to the discipleship are narrated in Matt. 4 : 18 and the parallel passages. Still later came the formal selection of the twelve from the larger body of the disciples (Luke 6 : 12 ; Mark 3 : 13). By a process of spiritual selection, four of these twelve were gradually promoted to a special intimacy with their Lord : John and his brother James, Simon and his brother Andrew. But even among these, John enjoyed the special distinction of being "the disciple whom Jesus loved." These four are always named before the others in lists of the apostles. Peter, James, and John were

chosen by Jesus to accompany him to the chamber of the dead daughter of Jairus (Mark 5 : 37), to witness his transfiguration (Mark 17 : 1), and to share with him the agony of Gethsemane (Matt. 26 : 37). If Peter is in a certain sense the leader, John is not far behind. He alone of the twelve, so far as appears, was with his master in his dying hour, and to his care Jesus committed his mother (John 19 ; 26, 27)—a trust that was doubtless faithfully executed.

**Second Period.**—Peter and John were the first of the disciples to visit the tomb of Jesus. John, the younger and more vigorous, outran Peter when they heard from Mary Magdalene that the body was gone, but it was Peter who first entered the tomb—two very characteristic incidents (John 20 : 4–6). The same difference is seen on the appearance of Jesus to them on the sea of Galilee (John 21 : 1) ; John first sees and recognizes him, but it is Peter who plunges into the water to go to him. After the ascension of our Lord, we find Peter and John leading the work of the church. It was through them that the first apostolic miracle was wrought, and though Peter was the spokesman, it was John's faith equally with his own that made possible the healing of the lame man (Acts 3 : 3, 4). With Peter he is sent to the brethren in Samaria, and welcomes them as believers in the Lord Jesus, thus taking his part in the first great expansion of the church. In the persecution under Herod Agrippa his brother James was put to death, and doubtless he was forced to seek safety in flight, but he returned and was one of the leading figures in the council of Jerusalem, being then and always regarded as one of the "pillars" of the church (Gal. 2 : 9). From this time on, the only trace

we have of the apostle, except in his writings, is in vague traditions. That he spent some time on the isle of Patmos he tells us himself (Rev. 1 : 9) ; that he dwelt a long time in Ephesus is probable ; and that he outlived all the other apostles, accords well with internal evidence from his writings. Tradition fixes his death nearly at the close of the first century.

**His Character.**—None of the apostles have been more misunderstood than John. He is popularly known as "the apostle of love"—an appropriate enough name, considering the prominence of this idea of love in his later writings, but unfortunate in the conclusions it has suggested. If we knew John only from his Gospel and Epistles, composed in his old age, when experience had mellowed and ripened him, we might infer that his character in its softness was more womanly than masculine. Painters commonly picture him as slight and beautiful to the verge of effeminacy. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fiery impetuosity John was inferior only to Peter among the twelve, during their early discipleship at least. It was because of vehemence and intensity of character that James and John were surnamed Boanerges, Sons of Thunder. It was they who rebuked one who cast out devils in their Lord's name because he walked not with them ; who wished to call down fire from heaven on the inhospitable Samaritans ; who boasted themselves able to drink of their Master's cup, and aspired to sit one on his right hand and the other on his left in his kingdom. Pride, ambition, revenge—the sins of strong and ardent natures—are the traits that we find disclosed by these incidents. They mark masculine strength, not feminine

delicacy. It is true that the grace of God gave John the ultimate mastery of these tendencies toward evil, but he became the apostle of love, not because he was feebly amiable by nature, but because through long years of conflict he gained the victory over self. Love is not weakness, but strength. In the kingdom of grace, as well as in the kingdom of this world, it is true that

> The bravest are the tenderest,
> The loving are the daring.

**His Writings.**—The view taken of John's character above is confirmed by his writings, and, in turn, explains their peculiarities. The Revelation was written while he was still comparatively a young man, before the fires of his youthful character had been completely subdued. It is more impetuous in movement, bolder in imagery, more rugged in style, than his later writings. We may place the date at not later than 70 A. D. On the other hand, the Epistles and Gospel are markedly similar in tone, and belong to his later years, as we might conjecture if we had nothing but internal evidence to guide us. We may assign the Epistles to a date not earlier than 90 A. D., and the Gospel to one not later than 100 A. D.

LITERATURE.

Excellent articles may be found on John's life and writings prefixed to Hovey's, Meyer's, and Godet's Commentaries on John; in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," and the "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia"; and there is a good monograph, modeled on Conybeare and Howson's biography of Paul: Dr. Macdonald's "Life and Writings of St. John. See also Neander, "Planting and Training," book V.

# XXVI.

## PETER THE ROCK.

**His Early Life.**—Simon or Symeon (Acts 15 : 14) was a native of Bethsaida, the son of one Jonas (Matt. 16 : 17) or John (John 1 ; 42). His father was a fisherman, probably a man of some means, as his family and that of Zebedee were partners in the fisheries, owned boats and hired assistants. The statement in Acts 4 : 13 that Peter and John "were unlearned and ignorant men" is true only from the standpoint of members of the Sanhedrin. These words mean simply that they were not trained in the schools of the rabbis, not that they were illiterate. To a Gamaliel, a Plato or a Cicero would have been "unlearned and ignorant." We may be sure that Simon had been taught to read, that he had some knowledge of Greek, and that he was familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. At the opening of the gospel history he was married, and the house in which he then lived at Capernaum was large enough for him to entertain Jesus and a number of his disciples, after his mother-in-law had been healed of a fever. Simon and his brother Andrew had been among the disciples of John the Baptist, and they were preceded only by the sons of Zebedee in attaching themselves to Jesus. Their first call was one of discipleship simply, and after spending some weeks in his company and attending the Passover with him, they returned for a time to their business. The final call of

Andrew and Peter is told in Matt. 4 : 18 seq., and then they left all and followed their Master.

**Until the Resurrection.**—The record of Simon's life from this time on is inseparable from that of Jesus. So far as appears from the Gospels, he was not parted from his Master for a day, after his final call to service. He had been named by our Lord, Cephas—a stone or rock, *Petros* being the corresponding Greek word—and he well deserved the title, in spite of his amazing conduct at times. Very early he attained a recognized primacy among the twelve—not a primacy of office, for he never claimed any official superiority nor was any such superiority conceded to him ; but a primacy of character, of leadership. Peter had the qualities that everywhere bring men to the front. He was bold to the verge—and often beyond the verge—of rashness, self-confident, impulsive, not afraid of responsibility, ready of speech. There was more of rugged strength than of polish and tact in his character, but he was also a man in whom the affections were as warm as the spirit was ardent, and the will unbending. He showed none of the obstinacy that weak men imagine to be strength. He was at times open to the charge of fickleness and cowardice. Strong men are sometimes susceptible to sudden fits of irresolution ; brave men will sometimes yield to momentary panic. It is no inexplicable thing that Peter boasts his readiness to die for his Lord, vows that though all become faithless he will remain faithful, and so far makes good his words as to draw his sword and attack the nearest man in the crowd who had come to arrest Jesus, and then suddenly takes to his heels and ingloriously runs away ; follows his Master afar off, and

finally denies him thrice in quick succession. This episode, shameful as it is, cannot wipe out the record of his former faithfulness and his later devotion.

It was Peter who first confessed Jesus as the Christ of God; upon Peter, not in any exclusive sense but as the leader and representative of the apostles, Jesus said that he would build his church; to Peter, in the same representative capacity, he gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16 : 17–19; comp. 18 : 18). And yet it was this same Peter whom Jesus called Satan (the adversary) when he would hinder the accomplishment of God's purposes. It was the impulsive, brave Peter who walked upon the water to meet his Lord, and it was a sudden onset of faint-heartedness that caused him to sink. (Matt. 14 : 28–31.) But it was Peter whom Jesus chose for his most intimate companionship, and together with James and John, as witness of his miracles, his transfiguration, and his passion.

**In the Apostolic Church.**—The primacy of Peter stands out very clearly in the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. It was at his suggestion that another was chosen to fill the vacancy in the twelve. It was he who preached the sermon on the day of Pentecost which resulted in the addition of three thousand to the church. He was the spokesman in the healing of the lame man before the Sanhedrin, and in executing judgment on Ananias and Sapphira. He was the leader in the work among the Samaritans; he made a tour through the cities, working miracles at Lydda and Joppa; he first preached the gospel to a heathen, and baptized the first Gentile convert; he turned the scale in favor of Paul at the Council of Jerusalem.

From this time on we are left largely to conjecture and to tradition for Peter's history, yet we may draw the main outlines of his subsequent career with considerable confidence in their accuracy. His name is especially associated in tradition with the churches of Asia Minor, especially with that of Antioch, and with the church at Rome. Of his work at Antioch we have testimony in the Acts, and later still in Gal. 2 : 12, where we learn of another instance in which the usually bold and resolute Peter became a vacillating and time-serving man. This lapse was particularly unfortunate, because, but for the superior courage and firmness of Paul, the Judaizers would have conquered, at least for the time. We learn from 1 Cor. 10 : 5 that Peter's missionary labors were continuous, and that his wife was still living and sharing his labors as late as A. D. 57. From 1 Pet. 5 : 13 we learn that he was for a time in Babylon, unless we take this name to be used symbolically for Rome, as in the Revelation, which seems quite improbable. This reference, and the opening verses of the epistle, strongly confirm the tradition that the upbuilding of the Asiatic churches was due largely to the labors of Peter.

The tradition of Peter's martyrdom at Rome is so early and unanimous that there is no good reason for doubting its truth. It probably occurred some time after the death of Paul, for had Peter been in Rome during Paul's lifetime it is inconceivable that no mention of the fact should have been found in the Pauline Epistles. The later tradition, of which the Roman Catholic church makes so much, that Peter was bishop of Rome for twenty-five years, is manifestly absurd, being quite irreconcilable with the New Testament.

**His Writings.**—Two letters in the New Testament profess to be composed by Peter. An ancient tradition says that Peter did not write them personally, having an imperfect knowledge of Greek, but employed an interpreter. If he employed different persons for the two letters, this might be allowed to explain the differences of the style that are quite obvious, from which some critics have drawn conclusions adverse to the genuineness of the second letter. The genuineness of the first has never been seriously questioned; both the external and the internal evidence are strongly in its favor. It is exactly the practical, hortatory letter that we might expect from Peter, without much of the doctrinal element and lacking in logical sequence, but marked by directness, simplicity, and fervor. The second letter is more rhetorical; its correspondences with the Epistle of Jude are such as to suggest imitation of that letter; and serious doubts of its genuineness existed in the early church. It was one of the last books to be admitted to the New Testament canon. On the other hand, both its style and its contents are far above the later apocryphal writings, and the claim of Petrine authorship is clearly made. The church has been justified in holding that no mere negative testimony could offset these facts, especially when it is considered that believers of all succeeding ages have found this epistle "profitable for instruction which is in righteousness."

NOTE.—The interpretation of Matt. 16 : 17–19 adopted above, is not that to which many Baptists are accustomed. The following from the volume on Matthew, by Dr. John A. Broadus, in "The American Commentary on the New Testament," may be found help-

ful: "As Peter means rock, the natural interpretation is that 'upon this rock' means *upon thee.* No other explanation would probably at the present day be attempted, but for the fact that the obvious meaning has been abused by Papists to the support of their theory. But we must not allow the abuse of a truth to turn us away from its use; nor must the convenience of religious controversy determine our interpretation of Scripture teaching. . . The Protestant reluctance to admit that the rock means Peter really plays into the hands of the Romish controversialists. It forms the impression that conceding that point would be conceding all that the Romanist claims. . . Now to take Peter as the rock is certainly the most natural and obvious meaning. And to make this the life or death issue is to give the Romanist a serious polemical advantage." And again: "However the rock may be understood, all must agree that our Lord gives the keys to Peter, *i. e.*, the power of admitting (*e. g.*, Acts 11 : 17), or denying admission (*e. g.*, Acts 8 : 21), into the Messianic Kingdom. Yet it is not given to him in any exclusive sense, for the closely connected power of binding and loosing was not long after given to any church (18 : 18), and the included power of forgiving sins was given to the ten apostles and others (John 20 : 23)." With this view agree the majority of exegetes of the first rank, for example, Alford: "He was the first of those foundation stones (Rev. 21 : 14) on which the living temple of God was built. . . Let us keep to the plain, straightforward sense of Scripture, however that sense may have been misused by Rome." Bengel: "These two, πέτρα and πέτρος, *rock* and *stone*, stand for one thing, just as both are expressed in Syriac by one noun, *Kepha.* . . The church of Christ is certainly built on the apostles, both as the first believers and because it is through their labors the rest have been added; and in this the prerogative of chief, in a certain sense, was clearly Peter's, yet without destroying the equality of apostolic authority." Olshausen: "The symbolic name which the Saviour gave to Peter immediately after his first reception as his disciple he here renews, with a definite explanation of its meaning. Peter is to be the *rock* of the edifice of the church. . . The church, as a spiritual structure, must rest naturally on a spiritual foundation: Peter, therefore, in his new spiritual character, appears as the sup-

porter of Christ's great work among mankind. Jesus is himself the creator of the whole. Peter the first stone of the building." Schaff: "The phrase refers to Peter, but *as a confessor*, as in Christ, representing the other apostles. This explains both the resemblance and the difference of the words: 'Petros' and 'petra'; it is on the whole preferable. From personal qualities he was the first among equals, and as he had represented the apostles in the confession, so now in the Lord's declaration. . . The other apostles are included, since what is addressed to Peter in the next verse is afterward repeated to all the apostles."

LITERATURE.

Articles on Peter in the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia, in the American Commentary, Meyer's Commentary, etc. The best monograph is Dr. William M. Taylor's "Peter, the Apostle" (Harpers). On the question whether Peter was ever at Rome, see Schaff, "History of the Christian Church," vol. I., pp. 253–264. Dean Howson's "Horæ Petrinæ" is excellent. See also Neander, "Planting and Training," book IV., chap. 2.

## XXVII.

### JAMES, THE LORD'S BROTHER.

**His Identity—Unbelief—Conversion.**—Many have confused, and some have tried to identify, James the brother of the Lord (Matt. 13 : 56 ; Mark 6 : 3 ; Gal. 1 : 19) with James the son of Alpheus (Matt. 10 : 3, etc.). It seems evident, and the majority of scholars so hold, that they were two distinct persons. This identification would probably never have been attempted, but for the reluctance of some to acknowledge that Jesus had brothers in the flesh, notwithstanding the explicit statements in the New Testament that he had. This feeling, which ultimately produced the Mariolatry of the Roman church, rests on a distinctly unscriptural conception of the dignity and sacredness of the institution of marriage. The identification of these two persons, indeed, is made seemingly impossible by the statement, subsequent to the calling of the twelve, that his brethren did not believe in Jesus (Matt. 3 : 56 ; John 7 : 5). This statement, entirely unqualified, excludes James the Lord's brother from the disciples of our Lord, as well as from the original apostles. It is by no means inexplicable that those who had grown up in the familiarity of home life with Jesus should have failed, at least for a time, to recognize his higher dignity—should have been unable to see in him the Son of God as well as the Son of Man. Whether all the other members of the family ever believed we are

not told, but James certainly became a true-hearted believer, and so did his brother Jude. When this change occurred we can only conjecture; we only know that, very early in the history of the church at Jerusalem, we find James holding a commanding position such as can be reasonably accounted for only on the theory that he was a member of the church from the first. We are told by the Apostle Paul that Jesus appeared to James after his resurrection (1 Cor. 15 : 5), and if he was not a believer before we may well suppose that this vision of the risen Lord made him one; while if he had already believed, the vision confirmed his faith for the rest of his life.

**Bishop of Jerusalem.**—James seems to have been an elder or bishop of the church at Jerusalem from an early date. In the preceding studies we have seen the evidence of this, and likewise have noted the weight that this position as well as his personal character gave to his counsels. He was not an apostle, properly speaking, though Paul uses language in two cases that seems so to class him (1 Cor. 15 : 7, where "all the apostles" is practically equivalent to "all the other apostles"; and Gal. 1 : 19). This may mean, and probably does mean, only that the position of James had come to be of dignity and influence equal to that of an apostle. He does not claim this title for himself; no New Testament writer explicitly gives it to him; and instead of being *sent forth* as a witness (which is what "apostle" means), he remained in Jerusalem. But his work was as important and as fruitful of good as that of an apostle. Then, as now, God set some in the church to be evangelists and some to be pastors.

**His Character.**—James acquired the surname of "the Just," according to uniform tradition. This is confirmed by the reference of Josephus, who calls him "a most just (or righteous) man" (Antiq. 20, 3 : 1). This was probably used in the Jewish sense, "righteousness" consisting, in the estimation of a Jew, in strict observance of the Mosaic law. This accords with what we learn of James in the Acts of the Apostles. The compromise between the Judaizers and the Pauline party, suggested by him and adopted by the council of Jerusalem, indicates the extreme to which he was then willing to go in conceding even to Gentile Christians freedom from the Mosaic requirements. James continued to be the acknowledged leader of the Jewish Christians up to the time of his death, though he is not to be charged with the excesses committed by his followers, any more than Paul was chargeable for the acts of the Pauline party at Corinth. There was something formal, stern, and unbending in his nature, yet he showed genuine fraternal feeling toward Paul, and no personal differences appear between him and any other Christian leaders. He was at heart a Jew, but a Christian Jew, to the last. According to Josephus, who relates the story of his martyrdom, he was put to death about the year 63 A. D.

**His Epistle.**—The Epistle of James is directed to the Jews of the dispersion, and was written before the unbelief of the Jews had hardened into bitter hated of Christians and the Christian religion. Its dominant note is practical morality; no other part of the New Testament of equal length contains so much instruction and exhortation concerning daily living. The tone is at times severe, almost

bitter, in its rebuke of sin. Its denunciation of the rich, who used their wealth and power to oppress the poor, has never been surpassed in point and energy. "Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," are words that sum up fully half the contents of the letter.

**Salvation by Works.**—The letter teaches a doctrine of salvation at first sight totally irreconcilable with that preached with so much energy by Paul. In the Pauline Epistles it is said again and again that by faith we are justified. But James says explicitly, and confirms it by illustrations from the Old Testament, that "by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." It was because of this apparent contradiction that Luther rejected the authority of this letter altogether, calling it contemptuously "an epistle of straw." But the judgment of Christendom has pronounced Luther wrong in this hasty rejection, and wrong in the interpretation on which it was founded. The Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, and James' doctrine of justification by works, are contradictory only as the two opposite sides of a coin are contradictory. Of a curved line, one side is necessarily concave, and the other convex; but the two sides do not contradict, they complement each other. Paul's teaching and that of James are two hemispheres which together make the entire and perfect sphere of truth regarding salvation. Either, taken alone, is a half-truth, and may therefore easily become the most dangerous of lies. Justification by faith, taken alone, lends itself to the perversion known as antinomianism—that is, since the Christian, being justified by faith, is no longer under law but under grace, he is, therefore, above law;

he is no longer under the restraint of law, but is become a law unto himself. Therefore, again, he is under no obligation to keep the moral law. Frightful immoralities have been committed by men professing this belief. On the other hand, justification by works, taken alone, is easily perverted into formalism, the idea that the observance of a round of religious duties constitutes a religious life, and ensures salvation. This idea completely nullifies religion, as the history of the Church of Rome abundantly proves. We reach the truth only when we take both teachings together. We are justified by faith, but only by a faith whose perfect flower and fruitage is a life of good works; we are justified by works, but only by works whose roots are in a heart filled with faith and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness," says the Old Testament Scripture. From this Paul draws the valid conclusion that the righteous shall live by faith, not by the law; and James draws the equally valid conclusion that faith wrought with the works of Abraham, and by works was his faith made perfect.

## LITERATURE.

See the introductions to the Epistle of James in all good commentaries, especially the "American Commentary" and Meyer's "Commentary." Also articles on "James" and "James, Epistle of," in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," and the "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia"; Neander, "Planting and Training," book IV., chap. 1, also book III., chap. 4; Sechler's "Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times," second part, chap. 2.

# XXVIII.

## CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

We have thus far considered mainly the development of the church from the outside, studying events rather than life; institutional Christianity rather than Christianity as a social force. We need also to look at the church from the inside, to consider what made possible the rapid spread of Christianity, throughout the Roman Empire. As we saw in the Introduction, the conditions for its spread were favorable; but an opportunity does not explain a result.

**Christianity a Transforming Power.**—What the religion of Christ is to every believer, that it has been and is to society—a power to transform life. This element of Christianity early and deeply impressed the Roman world. Every heathen writer who mentions Christians during this early period, though he may ascribe to them (on hearsay evidence) incredible beliefs and practices, bears witness to their blameless lives. The literature and art of this time give testimony, all the more convincing because it is unconscious, to the wide-spread and appalling degradation of heathen society. Roman society was honeycombed with an immorality so hideous that even the scorching words of the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Roman church but faintly represent the facts. Grecian society was as bad or worse. The heathen religions, as a sanction of or an incentive to practical righteousness, had utterly broken down. These

religions had a moral basis (though an imperfect one), and heathen philosophers commended morality ; but Christianity first made a life of righteousness possible through a renewal of the heart, a cleansing of the soul, a quickening and enlightenment of the conscience. The apostolic church grew with a rapidity so astonishing because the Christians of apostolic times were living epistles of Christ that the world did not fail to read and understand, because they showed the power of their religion to produce holy living. The tree was known by its fruits.

**Special Gifts in the Apostolic Church.**—This growth was doubtless promoted by special gifts bestowed upon the apostolic church. To some of the apostles, possibly to all, the gift of miracles was granted. It is the fashion in our day to disparage the evidential value of miracles ; instead of receiving them as a witness to doctrine and official authority, we now rather demand that doctrine and official authority shall bear witness to the miracles. But the case was far otherwise in the apostles' day, and the miraculous gifts of the early church powerfully impressed the people to whom the gospel was first preached. There was also a special gift of prophecy, not in the narrow sense of predicting future events to which we now restrict the word, but the public exposition of God's truth. To prophesy, in the New Testament sense, is to speak for God. The gift of prophecy was not commonly the seer's power to foretell the future, but a special illumination of the Spirit by which all religious truth was more clearly and accurately discerned that it might be imparted to others. There was also the gift of tongues, which it is difficult for us to understand in any other way

than the temporary endowment of certain believers with the power to preach the gospel in a language they did not commonly understand. The gift was certainly not permanent; it had its special use on such occasions as the day of Pentecost, when multitudes speaking different languages were gathered, or in cities like Corinth, where a heterogeneous population dwelt. The end of these and all other special gifts to the apostolic church was "the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."

**Christianity and the Family.**—The spread of Christianity was greatly helped by its teaching and practice regarding the family. In heathendom, the family idea had almost perished, and family life was becoming unknown. Rome began with an almost superstitious reverence for the family; it ended with the family utterly destroyed. In the beginning the father had absolute power over the family—even the power of life and death. Women and children were chattels, except that the head of the family could not sell them. But during the apostolic age, partly by reforms in the law, and still more by demoralization of the people, the family lost this coherence. Divorce was as easy as marriage, and as common; and faithfulness to the marriage vow, even while marriage endured, was the exception. The Christian religion offered to heathendom both the theory and the fact of a pure family life. It founded the family on the life longunion of husband and wife, on their mutual affection, forbearance, and faithfulness. It made woman not man's slave, or his toy, or his household drudge, but his complement, his other self. It followed of necessity that

the status of woman should be elevated wherever Christianity prevailed. In the same way that woman was elevated the bonds of the slave were removed. The New Testament does not directly attack slavery, it does not directly assert the equality of woman ; it establishes a family life that makes equally impossible the subjection of woman and the continuance of slavery. In Christ there is neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, but a new creation. This principle has only to be given time to work itself out in any nation, and the reorganization of the social order is certain.

**The Unity of Christians.**—The growth of the church was greatly promoted by its substantial unity. The unity was not perfect,—nothing is ever perfect in this world,—but it was sufficiently marked to make a profound impression upon the heathen world. It is one of the things most emphasized in the New Testament. At the beginning it is especially recorded that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." Christians were earnestly exhorted to give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." They were noted for their care of the poor among them. The Apostle Paul rebukes nothing with more severity—not even gross immorality—than the bickerings and quarrelings among Christians. It is probable that the outside world knew little of these ; certainly heathendom was spared the sight of a multitude of warring sects, each apparently more zealous in pulling down its neighbor than in building up the kingdom of God. Nevertheless we should err if we pictured to ourselves the apostolic times as a sort of "golden age" of the church, the glories of which

we may never hope to see return. The letters to the seven churches of Asia show that the churches of our time had antitypes in the days of the apostles.

**Christian Worship.**—The simplicity of Christian worship, as clearly shown in the New Testament, was another element of power in the early church. All the heathen religions were religions of forms, of ceremonies, of elaborate ritual; the religion of Christ exalted the spiritual element. As a man became a Christian only by being born again of the Spirit, so he continued a Christian only by having his new life nourished and strengthened by the same Spirit. Public worship consisted, in the apostolic churches, of prayer, the singing of psalms and hymns, the reading of the Scriptures, and the expounding of what was read. The use of liturgical prayers was a feature of the Jewish synagogue, and doubtless this custom was soon adapted to the worship of the Judæo-Christians. There are many rhythmical passages in the apostolic writings, which seem to have been taken from early liturgical compositions. But whatever use was made of written prayers or brief Confessions of Faith, there is no trace in the New Testament or in the earlier post-apostolic writers of a fixed liturgy. All was flexible and spontaneous. The spiritual life and emotion of Christians expressed itself naturally and in varied forms, so much so that the very verge of disorder was sometimes reached. The warnings of Paul to the church of Corinth would have been superfluous, had anything like a modern liturgy been in use. Indeed, what we gather from the letters to this church warrants the conclusion that at Corinth, at least, the meetings for public worship partook more of the

nature of our prayer and conference meetings than of our more formal Sunday services. How far this was the rule throughout the churches of the apostolic age may, of course, be considered an open question.

## LITERATURE.

Very valuable are chap. 8 and 9 of Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," vol. 1. See Stalker, chap. 8, "A Picture of a Pauline Church," and review chap. 13 of Conybeare and Howson. See also Hurst's "Short History of the Christian Church," p. 5, and chap. 6 and 7; Fisher's "History of the Christian Church," pp. 34–44; Neander's "Planting and Training," book III., chap. 5; and "History of the Christian Church," vol. I., pp. 68–79.

# XXIX.

## CHRISTIANITY AT THE END OF THE APOSTOLIC ERA.

**The Last Thirty Years.**—Written records of the latter part of the first century are very scanty. We can infer what must have been the course of events only from what we find in existence early in the second century. The destruction of Jerusalem powerfully promoted the growth of the Christian churches. That catastrophe brought to a close the great controversy with the Judaizers that was so troublesome, so divisive up to that time. With the end of the temple worship and the dispersion of the Jews, the main support of the Judæo-Christians was gone; their influence was broken and they gradually disappeared as a party from the church. Traces of Jewish influence can be found in the literature of the second century, but no traces of a Jewish party in the Christian churches. The dispersion of Christians that followed the destruction of Jerusalem was favorable to a more rapid spread of their doctrines. The church at Jerusalem and its bishop had a primacy of influence among the apostolic churches that might have developed in no long time into such a primacy as the Church of Rome gained some centuries later.

**Progress Made by Christianity.**—By the end of the first century, the gospel had been preached throughout the Roman Empire. Several of the apostles, notably Peter and John, were as active, and apparently as successful, in plant-

ing churches in Asia as Paul was in planting churches in Europe. If we may attach any weight whatever to tradition, we may conclude from its vague reports that all of the twelve, as well as the New Testament writers who were not apostles, were diligent preachers of the gospel until death ended their labors. Andrew is said to have preached in Scythia, Thomas to have evangelized Parthia, Mark to have founded the church in Alexandria ; and while these may be the inventions of a later time, rather than lingering echoes of the truth, the invention of these details testifies to a general belief in the church in the abounding and fruitful labors of all the apostles. Enough regarding those labors is recorded for our instruction and edification ; more full records might have gratified our curiosity or our craving for complete knowledge, but could hardly have made more impressive the lessons that the Holy Spirit wished to teach the Christians of all ages. It has been estimated—but, of course, it is pure guess-work—that by the end of this century there were not fewer than one hundred thousand Christians in the Roman Empire. What we know certainly is that there were Christian churches in nearly every city. The churches of Antioch, of Ephesus, of Alexandria, of Corinth, of Rome, were already so strong as to excite jealousy and bitter persecution. The letters to the seven churches in the opening chapters of the Revelation name other churches that, in Asia at least, were chief in importance and influence.

A parallel has sometimes been drawn between the progress of Christianity in the Roman Empire during this first century and the progress of modern Christian missions among the heathen nations during the last hundred years.

It is little more than a century since the Christian churches undertook in real earnest the conquest of the world for Christ. In that time they have evangelized a vastly greater territory, and have probably planted more churches and gained more converts in heathendom than were to be found in the year A. D. 100 in the Roman Empire. Every sign points toward the completion of the parallel—that in the two centuries to come so great progress will be made that Christianity will become the religion of the world, at least as truly as it was the religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine. But this is prophecy, not history.

**Beginnings of Corruption.**—We can see in the New Testament evidences that corruption was appearing in doctrine, in life, and in polity—corruption that became very evident early in the second century, and that developed by regular gradations into the system of doctrine and polity now known to us as the Roman Catholic church. Nearly every New Testament epistle contains warnings against false teachers and false teachings. If there was a Judaizing party in the apostolic church, there was also a paganizing party. Traces of its influence may be found in several of Paul's epistles, teachings such as afterward developed into the dangerous heresy of Gnosticism, the first attempt to restate Christian truth under the forms of a pagan philosophy. It was the chief error of this first great heresy that it practically denied the union of the human and the divine in Christ by eliminating the human. Christ was divine, being an emanation from God; but his human body was a phantasm, an illusion of the senses, and not a reality.

We see traces of sacramentalism in the New Testament.

Whatever may have been the "baptism for the dead," to which Paul refers (by no means with approval, but merely as an argument *ad hominem*), it appears to have had in it an element of superstitious reverence for the rite, a latent belief in its efficacy to do something. In the first half of the second century this idea became general, and developed into the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. As baptism came to be considered indispensable to salvation, it followed that when it could not be properly administered, some semblance of it was practised; hence, first the pouring of water and then the sprinkling of it upon the head was accepted as baptism. The same idea of baptismal salvation led parents, anxious for the salvation of their children, to have them baptized. These corruptions of the ordinance took several centuries to become fully established in the church, but the drift in that direction began soon after the death of the last apostle, if it had not manifested itself before his death.

Corruption of the church polity had also begun. A plurality of elders or bishops was general in the apostolic churches, and at first all the bishops of a church were on a footing of absolute equality. The necessity, or at least convenience, of having an acknowledged head caused one of them after a time to be elected, or tacitly regarded, as the president, the bishop *par excellence* of the church. The episcopate in no long time came to be an office separate from and higher than the presbytery, though it was not regarded as a separate order in the ministry. That idea, as well as the extension of the bishop's authority from a single church to a diocese, came considerably later. We find the local episcopate so firmly established early in the second century

as to compel the conclusion that the process began in the closing years of the first century.

Christianity differed and still differs from all other religions in its spiritual nature. It professes to accomplish man's salvation, not by rites and ceremonies, but by a spiritual process, which begins with a regeneration through faith and ends in the complete transformation of the soul. But mankind has a tendency, so innate and overmastering, to rely on the outward form of godliness, to seek salvation through rites, to buy its way or work its way into the kingdom of heaven, that, in spite of the clearest teachings of the New Testament, the early church substituted a religion of formalism for a religion of the Spirit. Hardly had the apostles left the churches they had founded, when the degenerating process began, and all the fervid exhortations and repeated warnings of Paul and his fellow-apostles could do no more than retard the process. There were always some in the church who had vision of the truth, and who protested against its perversion, but they were overborne by numbers and were either silenced or found a martyr's grave.

# XXX.

## DISTINCTIVE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHINGS.

We have now to sum up the results of our study of the apostolic age, its life, and its literature. Apart from the theological and ethical systems continued in or deducible from the New Testament, what are the distinctive principles therein taught? What is, in its essence, in its fundamental truths, in its characteristic structure, in its scriptural pattern, a church of Jesus Christ?

**A Spiritual Body.**—It is an assemblage of those whose lives witness that they have been regenerated by the Spirit of God. It exalts the spiritual over the formal. The break between Judaism and Christianity was complete. Every Jew was such by birth according to the flesh; he was an inheritor of the promise because he was in the line of descent from Abraham. Every Christian must be such by virtue of his personal relation to Jesus Christ. A child was made a Jew when he was circumcised on the eighth day according to the commandment; nobody can be made a Christian—he must become a Christian by personally accepting Jesus as his Saviour and Lord. A Jew supposed that he inherited the promises by faithful observance of the law of Moses; but no Christian has an excuse for deluding himself into the notion that he may find salvation in any forms, ceremonies, or works. He may look to be justified freely by the grace

of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and to be sanctified by the Spirit of God; and on no other condition do the Scriptures promise him salvation.

Religion being thus a matter between each soul and God, there is no room for priestly mediation. Every believer is a priest, Christ is our great High Priest, but for priesthood in the usual sense there is no place in the Christian church. Every soul may freely approach the throne of grace without any human intercessor or go-between. The church has ministers, but no priests. The ministry is not a separate order or class in the church, but an office with special functions, none of which, however, partake of a sacerdotal character.

Religion being thus sacredly personal, a direct relation between each soul and God, it must of necessity be a voluntary relation on man's part. Nobody can be coerced into the kingdom of God. Nobody can be compelled to become a Christian. It follows that every man's relation to God is a thing to be settled between him and God alone, without other intervention. This involves the inalienable right of every man to decide for himself how he shall worship and serve God, or whether he shall worship or serve God at all; and no other human being has any right whatsoever to force his decision. This is what is meant by "soul liberty"—a corollary from the fundamental principles of Christ's gospel that the world was eighteen centuries in drawing, and has as yet only half learned.

**Founded on Scripture.**—Chronologically the church preceded the New Testament; logically the New Testament preceded the church. For the church professes to be

founded on the teachings of Christ, to be subject to his authority in all things. It takes him as its only lawgiver and professes loyal obedience to his lightest command. The New Testament professes to be nothing less, nothing more, than the teachings of Christ—the Gospels his personal teachings while in the flesh, the Acts and Epistles his personal teachings through his Spirit. Theologians have always differed about the doctrine of inspiration; neither its extent nor its method has ever been so defined as to secure the general assent of Christian believers. What is beyond question is that the Scriptures make claim to have been written in virtue of a special guidance of the writers' minds by the Spirit of God, and for that reason to be the sole, the sufficient, the authoritative rule of faith and practice for every Christian believer. Whether the will of Christ is made known in these Scriptures by precept or by example, if only it is clearly made known, it is binding on the conscience of every follower of him. That the Old Testament Scriptures were received and treated as authoritative by Jesus and his followers we have convincing evidence in the New Testament; that the New Testament writings were at once received as of equal, and even superior authority by all believers, the early Christian literature abundantly testifies. The written word thus became, and has ever since continued to be, the sole standard of authority among the churches of Christ, not to be modified in any particular, still less to be set aside by any tradition, custom, or human authority. This is the fundamental principle of Baptists, because it is the fundamental law of the New Testament—obedience in all things to Christ, as his will is made known to his fol-

lowers in his written word, interpreted to the heart of each honest believer by the Holy Spirit. No scholar, no church court, can usurp this right and duty of private interpretation.

**Its Simplicity of Form.**—A New Testament church has but two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, that serve as bonds of union between believers by uniting them to one Lord. Baptism, symbolizing the new birth,—the death of the believer to sin, and his rising to newness of life,—and a witness as well to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, from its very nature is to be administered but once, and that at the beginning of the Christian life. Its significance is quite lost if administered to any but a believer, or if anything but an immersion in water is accepted as a substitute. Some baptize to make men Christians; the New Testament authorizes the baptism of those only who are Christians. The Lord's Supper, from its very nature, is an ordinance to be often observed, since it is at once a memorial of our Lord's death, a symbol of the believers' spiritual union with Christ, and a testimony that Christ's followers are of one mind, one spirit. As union with Christ and Christian fellowship necessarily follow the new birth, a natural sequence of the two ordinances is thus established by their significance. This natural sequence is also the actual sequence in the New Testament, which by example—not by definite precept—limits the observance of the supper to such as have believed and been baptized.

The organization of the New Testament churches was simplicity itself. But two offices are found in it, the pastorate and the diaconate. The pastor is varyingly called, as his

functions are differently looked at, "bishop" (*episcopos*), and "elder" (*presbyteros*). In many churches there was a plurality of elders, one of whom may have been chief by superiority of age, wisdom, or power of leadership, but not of official rank. Neither "bishop" nor deacon was regarded (nor regarded himself) as belonging to a separate class or order; the distinction between "clergy" and "laity" is wholly unknown to New Testament times, and belongs to a period of degeneracy and corruption.

This simplicity of organization is not to be regarded as in any sense a bar to further organization. A New Testament church is an organism, not a machine. As an organism it has the power of self-adjustment to its environment; and there is no limit to this self-adjustment save its fundamental constitution. There is a specializing of functions in the church as in every organism—an assigning of members to their appropriate work under competent supervision. The one test of organizations within the church is: Are these different forms of activity organic parts of the church? Do they exist by the authority of the church as a whole, in strict subordination and unswerving loyalty to the church? If they are, or are suffered to become separate entities, existing without authority of the church, and more or less in subordinate, jealous, antagonistic, and disloyal, then they are unscriptural and cannot be too soon abolished.

**Its Independence.**—Each New Testament church was independent of all external authority; it acknowledged but one lawgiver and head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to him alone was it responsible. But the New Testament churches were not independent of external obligations. They owed

to their fellow-Christians, both as individuals and as churches, whatever of loving service it was in their power to render. They were bound to give counsel and help to sister churches that had need of either, and frequent records in the New Testament show that this obligation was both acknowledged and fulfilled. The churches of Christ, like the individual believers of whom they are composed, are both independent and interdependent. It is not safe to push either idea to an extreme. Church independence is a phrase that is too often used to cloak injustice, willfulness, and imprudence; while the idea of interdependence might be so extended—has been so extended among Baptists—as to produce a sort of presbyterial control of a local church by other bodies. Both ideas need to be held in firm and just equipoise if we would not depart dangerously from the scriptural idea of a church.

It is this idea of mutual interdependence from which have proceeded those voluntary affiliations of the churches that constitute the marked feature of modern denominational life. The first step was the formation of local Associations of the churches, for the promotion of their piety and for common missionary effort. Not long after followed the organization of great missionary societies for the evangelization of continents; and missionary organizations along State lines came last of all. The scriptural test of the legitimacy of all such organizations is: Are they all voluntary associations, with only advisory and executive functions, assuming no legislative power over the local churches? If so, they are natural and healthful embodiments of the New Testament spirit, a wise exercise of Christian liberty. But if they forget that they are but servants of the churches, and aspire

to be masters, if they assume legislative and judicial functions, they are unscriptural and deserve to be abolished.

**Its Perpetuity.**—"The gates of hades shall not prevail against it," said our Lord. Not only does the church exist in obedience to Christ, but it is promised a perpetual existence. Its enemies may seem at times, and for a time, to have vanquished it; the continuity of its life may not be visible to the world at large—the stream may flow underground for a time—but it shall continue, and in God's good time shall again issue into the light of day. God's truth never has lacked, never shall lack, witnesses. And though they may again be few, as they have been few in past ages, theirs is the inheritance of the future. For heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of Christ's word, till all shall be fulfilled.

# APPENDIX A

In connection with the studies now published in this volume, there was suggested a simultaneous course of lectures that would elucidate and illustrate topics that could only be touched upon in the studies themselves. The suggestions were very generally adopted, and everywhere the lectures were found to be exceedingly helpful. They were especially successful in securing the interest and co-operation in the Christian Culture Courses work of older Christians who could not undertake the course. They were equally effective in keeping alive the interest of those who were actually pursuing the courses, and from time to time giving them a fresh draught of enthusiasm. In many cities a monthly rally or "symposium" was held, the chief feature of which was a lecture on the subject for the month by a leading pastor or layman. The syllabus of these suggested lectures is added to this volume, in the hope that as the studies are hereafter used by the young people, these may be found also to have a continued value. Where individuals, and not classes, pursue the studies, the syllabus will be found useful as a suggestion of additional lines of reading and study, and as furnishing themes for essays and other original work.

I. The Fullness of the Times; or, The Preparation of the World for the Spread of the Gospel.

1. A time of preparation necessary; in the earlier ages of the world the gospel would not have had a hearing, or would have remained the religion of a nation.

2. The nature of this preparation.

(*a*) A progressive revelation through the Old Testament Scriptures, and through the types of Judaism, of God's will.

(*b*) A chosen people prepared, coming gradually to a clear consciousness of the one God.

(*c*) Spread of the Greek civilization and language.
(*d*) Growth of the Roman power, with easy intercourse between all nations, peace, and protection of law.
(*e*) The religious unrest of the world.

Materials for the discussion of the points will be found in Fisher's "History of the Christian Church," chap. I, and Edersheim's "Life of Jesus, the Messiah," chap. I.

II. The Schools of the Prophets; or, Theological Education Among the Jews.
1. Jewish devotion to education (Geikie, "Life of Christ," 1 : 171–175).
2. The schools of the synagogues (Conybeare and Howson, pp. 64, 65).
3. The rabbinical schools.
(*a*) Origin—1 Sam. 19 : 19, 20; 2 Kings 2 : 3; 6 : 1; 4 : 38 (Smith's "Bible Dictionary," art. "Prophet.")
(*b*) Rabbis and their methods (Farrar, "Life of St. Paul," chap. 3; Conybeare and Howson, pp. 61–64).

III. Sanhedrin and Synagogue; or, The Influence of Judaism on Christianity.
1. Sanhedrin.
(*a*) Origin and composition.
(*b*) Influence on church councils.
(*c*) Influence in destruction of church independence and the development of a hierarchy.
2. Synagogue.
(*a*) The local organization of Jews into congregations.
(*b*) Place of meeting; trace resemblances to Christian churches.
(*c*) Officers.
(*d*) Worship.

Ample materials for the discussion of this subject will be found in the articles on "Sanhedrin" and "Synagogue" in Smith's "Bible Dictionary." From this (c) under Sanhedrin must be excepted; the lecturer will be compelled to work this out for himself from such hints as he can glean from Schaff, and other church historians.

IV. Our New Testament; How It Grew and How It was Completed.

No analysis is necessary to this theme. Materials may be found in any history of the Canon (as Westcott's), or in articles on the Canon in any encyclopædia of religious knowledge, for a popular summary of this subject.

V. The Teachings of Paul, and Their Effect on Christian Thought in All Ages.

1. The teachings of Paul. Give a brief but clear outline of the following principal points:
   (*a*) God's eternal purpose.
   (*b*) Universal sinfulness.
   (*c*) Person and work of Christ—atonement.
   (*d*) Redemption, including (1) Regeneration, (2) Justification, (3) Sanctification.
2. Their effect on Christian thought.
   (*a*) Augustine and his school.
   (*b*) Calvin and his theology.
   (*c*) Luther and his doctrine of justification by faith.

Materials for the first half of the lecture will be found in abundance in Weiss' "Biblical Theology of the New Testament," vol. I., p. 221, seq. For the second division materials may be found in Fisher's "History of the Reformation," and in encyclopædia articles on Augustine, Calvin, and Luther.

VI. Out of the Past; the Testimony of Art and Archæology to Christianity.

Purpose of early Christian art; religious rather than æsthetic.
Value of this testimony to the historic character of Christianity.

1. Pictorial testimonies.
   (*a*) Paintings and carvings in catacombs and elsewhere.
   (*b*) Miniatures, mosaics, glass.
2. Scope of their evidence.
   (*a*) As to historic events; ascension, resurrection, doings of the apostles, etc.
   (*b*) As to ordinances and customs (1) baptism, (2) Lord's Supper.
   (*c*) As to persons—ancient portraits of apostles.
3. Architecture's testimony.
   (*a*) Churches —The Roman basilica and its influence on early church architecture.
   (*b*) Baptisteries; Ravenna, St. John Lateran, etc.
4. The testimonies of Archæology.
   Emblems: Cross, crucifix. Ecclesiastical objects, chalice, etc.
5. Representations of special interest.
   Raphael's cartoons, especially the Death of Ananias, Stoning of Stephen, Paul at Lystra, Paul Preaching at Athens.
   Rubens: The Four Evangelists.
   Salvator Rosa: Philip baptizing the Eunuch (an illustration of how it was *not* done).

Rembrandt's Peter and John at the Temple Gate, and the stoning of Stephen (both etched by himself; many copies).
Filippino Lippi: Peter and Paul before Nero.

The difficulty has been to select from the enormous mass of material a few examples that are most accessible. Bennett's "Christian Archæology" (Phillips and Hunt) contains much material on nearly every point covered. Additional materials may be found in Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities."

# APPENDIX B

## HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS

The question raised by the baptism of Lydia and her household is a crucial one, for on its answer turns the argument for infant baptism in the apostolic times. There is no definite precept commanding the baptism of infants; if infant baptism cannot be found here, and in the other instances of household baptisms recorded, it can not be found anywhere in the New Testament. The following testimonies, all from Pedobaptist scholars of high rank, will be found of great value in reaching a decision of this question:

BEET: It must be at once admitted that the New Testament contains no clear proof that infants were baptized in the days of the apostles. It is true that Paul baptized the houses of Stephanas and of Lydia, and the Philippian jailer, and all who belonged to him (1 Cor. 1:16; Acts 16:15, 33). But this mention of baptized households by no means proves or suggests that he baptized infants. From these passages, therefore, we can draw no inference whether or not infants were baptized in the apostolic churches.—"Christian Baptism," pp. 28, 29.

DÖLLINGER: There is no proof or hint in the New Testament that the apostles baptized infants, or ordered them to be baptized. When the baptism of whole households is spoken of, it is left doubtful whether they contained little children, and whether, if so, these also were baptized.—"First Age of Christ and the Church," vol. II., p. 184.

FISHER: Whether infants were baptized in the apostolic age, or exactly when the custom arose of administering this rite to them, is a controverted question on which the New Testament writings furnish no direct information. The mention of the baptism of households is not entirely conclusive, since we are not certain that infants were contained in them; and, besides, if it were known that infants were not baptized, they would be understood to be excepted in a general statement of this sort respecting a household.—"Beginnings of Christianity," p. 565.

PRESSENSÉ: Christian baptism is not to be received, any more than faith, by inheritance. This is the great reason why we cannot believe that it was administered in the apostolic age to little children. No positive fact sanctioning the practice can be adduced from the New Testament; the historical proofs alleged are in no way conclusive. There is only one case affording any room for doubt [Lydia and her household], and those who attach more importance to the general spirit of the new covenant than to an isolated text, unhesitatingly admit that it is of no force.—"Early Years of Christianity," p. 337.

BLUNT: It is argued that as the household of Lydia and the jailer were baptized, there were probably infants among them; but, admitting this *probability*, there is no proof that the apostle baptized them. We cannot fairly prove the apostolic origin of infant baptism by assuming the existence of the usage itself. . . The evidence on this subject from Scripture amounts to this, that we only read of baptism after a profession of faith and repentance. This by no means, it is true, excludes the possibility of the existence at the same time of infant baptism without such conditions; but the fact must not be assumed without evidence, and the utter want of proof from Holy Scripture obviously leads to a different conclusion.—"Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology," article "Infant Baptism," pp. 343, 344.

OLSHAUSEN: For infant baptism nothing is to be deduced from the word *oikos* [household], for the adult members of the family, or the slaves likewise, might be signified.—"Commentary," on 1 Cor. 1 : 16.

NEANDER: We cannot infer the existence of infant baptism from the instance of the baptism of whole families, for the passage in 1 Cor. 16 : 15, shows the fallacy of such a conclusion, as from that it appears that the whole family of Stephanas, who were baptized by Paul, consisted of adults.—"Planting and Training," vol. I., p. 163.

The utmost, therefore, that any candid Pedobaptist claims is, a fair probability that infant children were found in at least one of the households mentioned as having been baptized. The experience of present-day Baptists in the matter of household baptisms may therefore be cited as of some weight in deciding this question of probability. The following article, printed in the editorial columns of "The Examiner," for May 15, 1884, shows what this experience is:

Some weeks ago "The Examiner" discussed the household baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, with special reference to the probability of their including any infant children. It is urged by many Pedobaptists that in the households of Lydia, the Philippian

jailer, and Stephanas—or at least in some one of the three—there were in all probability infant children. We then showed that the explicit statements of Scripture exclude this supposition in the first two cases, and in the third afford no plausible ground for it. We then asked the pastors who read "The Examiner," to give us their personal experience in this matter of household baptisms, believing that that experience would show such baptisms to be very common. If they are common, of course all foundation for the argument, based upon the probability that there were infant children in those three households, falls to the ground.

We have received a large number of responses, though not so many as we expected. A few of the pastors did not clearly understand what was asked, and tell us the number of baptized households in their churches; but their letters indicate that the members were not all baptized at one time, hence their facts are of no use to us. The contents of the other letters we summarize as briefly as possible.

Rev. H. W. Read, for many years an evangelist, says that he has baptized several scores of entire households—in one revival fifteen, and in another about a dozen. Rev. G. C. Baldwin, D. D., of Troy, has baptized twenty entire households, and Rev. G. B. Burnside, of Buffalo, reports nineteen. Rev. A. Stewart, for many years a missionary in Ontario, has baptized sixteen households, three of them at the same time and place. Rev. C. E. W. Dobbs, D. D., of Madison, Ind., in a ministry of twenty-four years has baptized eleven households, the youngest person in them being ten years old. Rev. F. M. Barbour, of Tuscaloosa, Ala., baptized nine households during ten years. Rev. A. J. Barrett, of Rochester, N. Y., has baptized six households containing twenty persons, in a ministry of eight years. Rev. George Brewer, of Knoxville, Tenn., Rev. Allen E. Light, of the First Kent Church, N. Y., and Rev. W. C. McAllister, of Plattsburgh, N. Y., have each baptized four households. Rev. R. H. Colby, of Chittenango, N. Y., has also baptized four households, two of them at a time. In a revival at Newfane, N. Y., Rev. E. J. Scott baptized an entire household three Sundays in succession. Rev. H. M. Richardson, of Maryville, Miss., reports the baptism of four households, containing nineteen persons. Rev. G. F. McNair, of West Creek, N. J., has baptized several households consisting of husband and wife, none of them containing any children at the time. Rev. Thomas Rogers, D. D., of Elbridge, N. Y., reports two entire households baptized by him and two other cases where the baptisms of the members of the households followed each other at very short intervals of time Rev. G. M. Hodge, of Janesville, Wis., reports "several" cases during his ministry.

Quite a number of pastors report baptisms of one or two households that are specially interesting as containing an unusual number of

adults. Rev. B. G. Manard, of Plattsburg, Miss., a household of six; Rev. Dexter P. Smith, of Iowa City, two households, one of them containing six adults—grandmother, parents, and children; Rev. Charles T. Herndon, of Leesburg, Va., two households, one of seven persons, and all the five children under fifteen years of age; Rev. Thomas Cruddington, of Cottage City, Mass., a family of five, the youngest eighteen years of age; Rev. A. R. Newton, of Carthage, Ill., a family of five; Rev. E. D. Phillips, of Hydeville, Vt., a family of six, the oldest fifty-one, the youngest eleven years.

Rev. L. A. Crandall, of Owego, N. Y., and Rev. C. A. Stone, of Afton, N. Y., have each baptized two households. The following report one household each: Rev. J. H. Hall, Newman, Ga.; Rev. J. G. Ward, Andover, Conn.; Rev. J. B. Hutton, Albion, Neb.; Rev. J. H. Dudley, Niles, Mich.

In the above lists we have given only households actually baptized by the writers. A number of these pastors have added that many other cases had come under their observation, or had been reported to them by persons of unquestioned accuracy. Two laymen also send us letters in which they report several cases of household baptisms that they had witnessed. From all of these facts, which are easily verifiable, but one conclusion can be drawn, which is, that the baptism of entire households at one place and time is a very common thing in our Baptist churches, and of course none of these households contain a child too young to believe in Christ and to be baptized on the profession of his personal faith. If this is so, what possible ground can there be for arguing that it is probable that the three households mentioned in the New Testament contained infant children?

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